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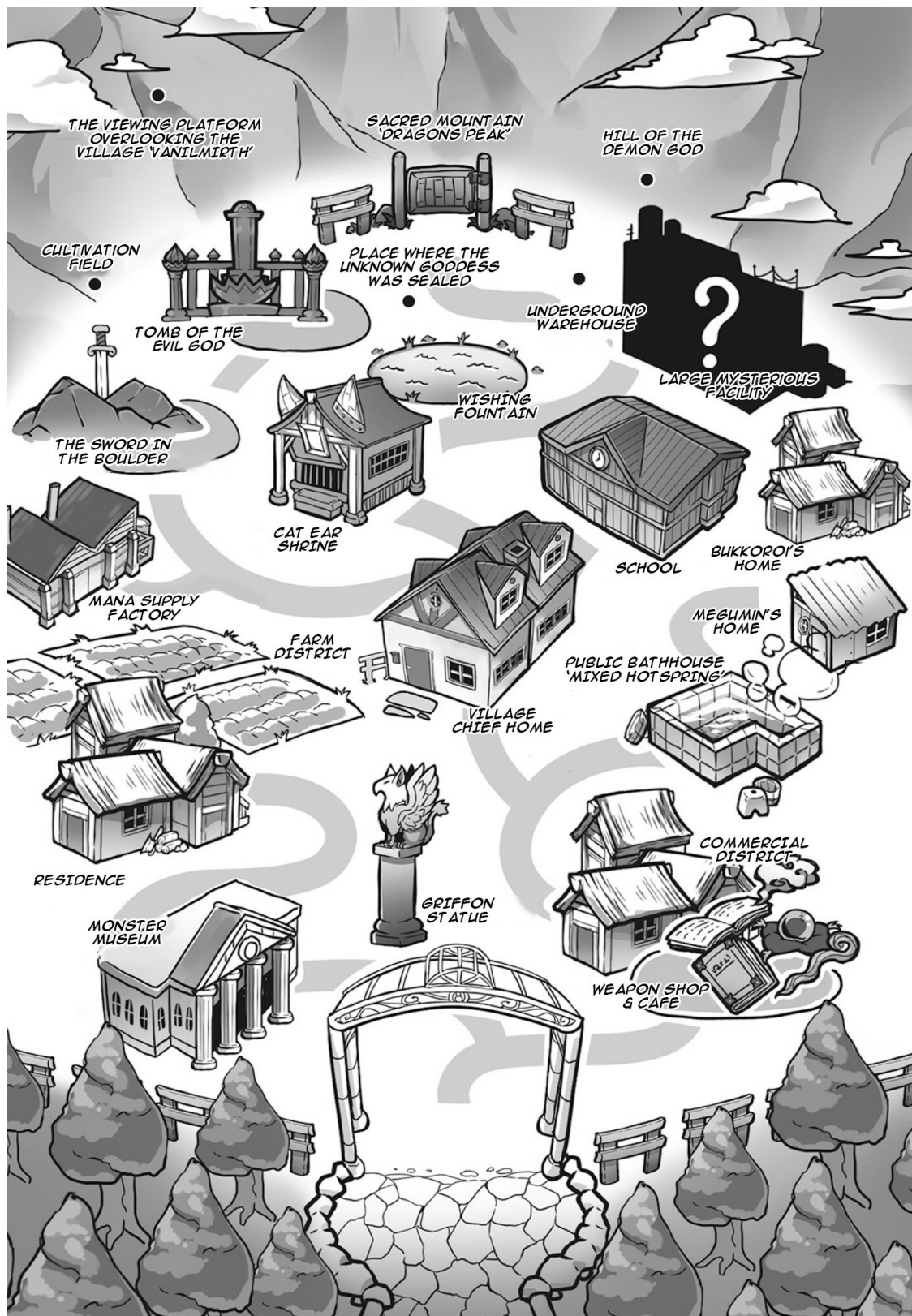
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(ムシカゴグラフィクス)



Exclusive Report on the village of the Crimson Magic Race!! “HOME OF THE CRIMSON MAGIC” ETERNAL GUIDE

Author & Photography / Arue

Scenic Attraction Catalogue

Within the Home of the Crimson Magic that is feared even by the Demon King, there are many beautiful sights. Many powerful monsters paved the road to the village, so be careful.

▶ WISHING FOUNTAIN



After throwing in an axe, you can summon the goddess of gold and silver. If you throw coins in, your wish will come true. A sacred fountain

▶ SWORD IN THE STONE



Rumoured to grant the one who pulls it out immense power, a legendary sword that is stuck in a boulder.

▶ PUBLIC BATH 『MIXED HOTSPRING』



The bath owner fills the tubs with 'Create Water' and heats it up with 'Fireball'.

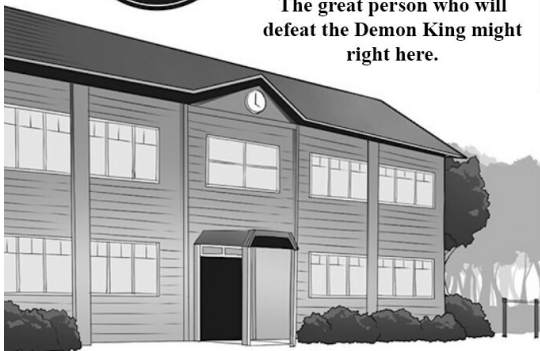
▶ CAFE 『DEADLY POISON』



The shop sounds dangerous but the food is delicious. Aside from this, there are many other shops with repeat customers such as the weapon shop 'Goblin Killer'.



The home of the Crimson Magic also has a high level education institute that nurtures Archwizards. I will introduce the future Archwizards studying here. The great person who will defeat the Demon King might right here.



Home of the Crimson Magic Academy seating arrangement



‘THE NUMBER ONE GENIUS OF THE CRIMSON MAGIC’ EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW OF A GREAT ALUMNI!

That's right. I am the 'Number one genius of the Crimson Magic'. My goal is to be the 'strongest', I don't give a damn about learning something as common as advance magic.



Prologue



My sister became independent recently, and was no longer sleeping with me. Unexpectedly, she squeezed herself under my blanket today.

“—But that youth said, ‘If I have a cheat, there is no need for companions. I will just be a solo player and get all the loot. Solo playing, hurray!’ and in actual fact, he was powerful enough to do this...”

Komekko’s goal was probably to let me read to her a picture book.

She hugged my family’s emergency ration Chomsuke and lay down beside me.

“Sis, what is a cheat?”

Komekko asked as she opened her tired eyes.

“A ‘cheat’ could mean ‘foul play’ or ‘being cunning’. This is a term used frequently by those people with strange names. Basically, it is a power so strong that should be against the rules.”

“Oh.”

Komekko started listening attentively again. I continued reading.

“The youth was very powerful, repeatedly defeating the demon king’s lackeys by himself.”

This was a very famous—

“The desperate demon king realized that he would lose to the youth in a direct confrontation. How can he defeat this youth then? The demon king then noticed that the youth never joined a party.”

—well-known legend from long ago.

“The demon king’s cadres said to the youth, ‘A lonely, loveless hero is a joke! Heroes usually cooperate with their companions to overcome obstacles then defeat the demon king! You don’t even have companions, so for what and for whom are you fighting? You might as well join us. We have a lot of perks.’ The cadres asked him to return after he made his decision. The youth went back

obediently.”

Finally, sleepy Komekko rested her head against my shoulders as I read the book.

“Finally, the youth attacked the demon king’s castle again and said to the demon king’s cadres. ‘I’m not lonely, I’m a soloist. It’s not that I can’t make friends, but rather I don’t need them, because I know companions will only become a liability... Also, what perks! You think I will be tricked so easily! A bargain with the demon king never ends well! I fight for humanity and peace! I won’t waste time with you, my goal is the demon king’s head! I can let you go, get lost!’ The youth pointed to the cadres and said. The demon king’s cadres replied, ‘If you said this back then, it would be quite cool.’ —The cadres were still destroyed in the end.”

Komekko started using my shoulder as a pillow, breathing softly.

I carefully avoided waking Komekko, reading the familiar picture book to myself.

“The brave youth penetrated deep into the demon king’s castle. Nothing could stop him. Finally he came before the demon king—“

Chapter 1

EXPLOSIVE NEET'S JOB HUNTING



PART 1

Some time had passed since the disturbance with the evil god's

minions.

Yunyun and I learned magic, graduated from the school, and went our separate ways.

Since Yunyun learned intermediate magic back then, she joined the self-defense group to hunt down monsters so that she could eventually learn advanced magic.

As for me—

“Good morning, NEET sis! Feed me now!”

“Komekko, don’t call me NEET sis. Where did you learn that word from?”

I spent my idle days being called a NEET by my sister.

“Listen, Komekko. I’m not a NEET. A NEET is trash that does not want to work. I’m looking for a job, but couldn’t find one. So I’m technically not a NEET.”

“Then what is it?”

.....

“Jo-Job seeker...?”

“NEET sis, I want to eat!”

“Ko-Komekko!”

I held my head in pain, after being habitually called this weird name by my sister who bore no ill intention.

—in the Home of the Crimson Magic, except for a few people who managed the necessary shops, most people worked on manufacturing the local specialty.

The Home of the Crimson Magic’s local specialty.

That was high-quality magic items and potions, made using our naturally powerful mana.

For example, the Skill Up Potion that Yunyun and I drank as if it was

merely water. If it was sold outside the village, a single bottle would cost tens of millions eris.

After I graduated, I found out about this and was so upset. Why didn't I keep at least one bottle back then?

The Crimson Magic Clan could create a lot of the highest quality magic items.

After all, arch wizard was an advanced job among wizards, which could not be achieved easily.

Yet the people here had the potential to become arch wizards at the moment they were born.

The magic items created by elite wizards supported the village's economy.

"...It would be great if there is a workshop willing to employ me today..."

I sighed as I prepared Komekko's breakfast.

PART 2

—Leaving the village as an adventurer to meet the person who taught me Explosion magic.

That was my goal.

To become an adventurer outside the village, I must first go to a city.

But there were powerful monsters around the Home of the Crimson Magic.

After using Explosion magic, I would be immobile, so I could not travel to a city alone.

There was a group of teleporters that made a living by sending people to distant places. They should be able to send me to a city...

"A single ticket to Alcanretia, the city of water and hot springs, costs 300,000 eris. I only have 4,000 eris right now... Is there any job to

make money...”

I looked at my lean money pouch and sighed deeply.

I wanted to go to Axel, the city where rookie adventurers congregated.

But since it was a rookie town with only weak monsters nearby, Axel was not a popular destination for Crimson Magic Clansmen who could use advanced magic.

To operate a long distance teleport, one must first go to the destination and record a save point. The local teleporters do not have Axel as an available location.

Thus, to reach Axel, I must teleport to Alcanretia, then proceed on foot or by carriage from there.

Firstly, I must find a job to earn money for the teleport fee...

—As I was thinking about this, I noticed a neighbor approaching from the opposite direction.

“Hey, Megumin, looking for a job today too? Or want to give up on working and join Anti-Demon King Army Guerilla Unit? You can join us and Yunyun to defend the village’s peace.”

“No, no... But, that introverted kid really joined.”

“Yes, she is quite enthusiastic. She says she will protect her comrades this time and learn advanced magic.”

Although the group name “Red Eyed Dead Slayers” embarrassed Yunyun, she joined these NEET’s self-defense force in order to train and learn advanced magic.

She trained relentlessly in order to gain experience with Buzucoily and the others, who were all elite wizards despite being NEETs.

“By the way, Buzucoily, is it really okay for you not to work? Your parents are always complaining.”

“My parents and society currently look down on me, but soon a great battle will come where we could use our power. To prepare for

this, I must train myself continually.”

Buzucoily said and clenched his fist under his gloves, which groaned from the tightness.

“Bye, Megumin. As a fellow NEET, I will help you if you have any non-financial problem.”

“I, I am not a NEET! I’m looking for a job!”

As I quickly retorted, Buzucoily turned, waved, and left.

Oh dear, oh dear.

In Komekko’s eyes, I’m just the same as that guy.

No matter what, I must find a job today...!

In the Home of the Crimson Magic, creating magic items was the most profitable.

Thus, after graduation, I visited a lot of workshops for interviews...

“Today’s interview is at tailor shop owned by Chekera... Today I must...!”

I slapped my face to encourage myself as I walked towards the interview site.

PART 3

“Welcome! My name is Chekera! An arch wizard who wields advanced magic! Owner of Crimson Magic Clan’s top tailor shop! You really came for the interview, Megumin.”

I did not know why he was wearing a cloak inside the shop. The owner of the only tailor shop in the village introduced himself and welcomed me. His name is Chekera.

This middle-aged shopkeeper seemed rather free. He went out of his way to maintain wind magic just to let his cloak flutter when I arrived.

After his self-introduction, he removed his cloak in satisfaction.

“Come in. My shop mainly manufactures magical fibers, used for making mana-enhancing robes. The strength of magical fibers depends on the maker’s magic power. So firstly, let me witness Megumin’s magic power.”

“Understood. Now witness my vast magic power!”

I confidently declared as I was brought inside the workshop.

In terms of mana amount, I was fairly confident.

“Can you direct your mana into this? You learned magic already, right? This is similar to using magic, just direct the mana here.”

Chekera explained and brought over some fabric.

I picked up a piece of fabric and infused it with my mana.

The white fabric was soon dyed with a dark color that was a favorite among Crimson Magic Clan.

The fabric transformation aroused my curiosity. I took the other pieces of fabric.

Infused them with mana as if I was normally using magic.

Infused them with mana...

“.....Megumin. Hey, Megumin!”

As I infused my mana, my emotions became excited, and my eyes brightened.

Currently, my eyes must be glowing red.

I thought I must find a job today and must do my best!

The fabric that was being infused with mana turned black in an instance, then reddish black, and eventually bright red...

Suddenly, Chekera took the fabric.

And hurriedly threw it deep into the shop.

“Freeze Bind!”

After the shout, red dyed fabric was frozen instantly.

Chekera looked pale.

“What are you doing! Are you trying to destroy my shop! A few seconds later, it would have exploded!”

“So-Sorry! But, but I was doing as you instructed...”

Oh no. This way, the ending would be the same as the other workshops...!

Chekera tilted his head, bewildered—

“Strange... Even if a fresh graduate exerts her full power, it should not be like this...”

He mumbled something and took out a handkerchief-sized cloth.

“You touch this cloth and infuse it with mana. Just your index finger would do.”

I did as instructed, lightly touching the cloth with my finger.

And it was dyed black, then became pure red as before...

“Freeze Bind!”

Chekera used the same magic and froze the red handkerchief.

He slowly shook his head.

“Megumin, your natural mana reserve is too strong. And you cannot control it perfectly.”

He looked at me regretfully.

“Megumin, your father Hyoizaburo also possesses great mana reserve, but he always creates some weird magic items. Having a great mana reserve is a natural endowment, so you should train your magic use and learn to control it. When you learn to control mana flow during infusion, you can come here again.”

I lost count of how many times I had been rejected.

—After leaving the shop, I felt lost.

It was the same in other workshops. I got fired on the first day.

It seemed my magic power was too strong.

Normally, this should be a good thing...

But the problem was I only learned Explosion magic. No wonder how I practice, I couldn't understand how to control the amount of mana during infusion.

Explosion magic was very exhausting, so using it required full flow of power without restriction.

I did not know how to control my mana flow.

In the end, no magic item workshop wanted me.

Maybe I could help my father to make magic items for a bit of cash?

No, no. I understood very well my father's magic items were all faulty and unsellable.

My poor family had no spare cash to employ me.

If it was like this, then...

I walked towards the potion-making workshop in the village—

“That's how it is. Previously, I thought this place doesn't pay as well as creating magic items, so I did not come here. But now, I can't be picky. I am quite confident in making potions, please employ me.”

“It is admirable to be honest during job hunting, but can't you be more polite? Say something like you wanted to cure a sick person or help the needy.”

“Then I'll take my leave.”

“Don't go.”

I forcefully trespassed into the potion workshop and asked the

shopkeeper for an interview.

I achieved some results in school for making potions.

Although I cannot make super difficult potions like the Skill Up Potion, I should be able to manage this work.

The shopkeeper looked troubled, but soon gave in and sighed.

“I already had enough workers here... but since you just needed short-term work to pay for teleport fee, it’s fine too.”

“Thank you!”

Success! I should have been more positive and went straight to the potion workshop!

It looked like money made me lose my way in life.

I must correct this fault, or my future companions would hate me.

“There are enough mixers. You can gather some ingredients. Go into the forest and hunt three One Strike Bears. Retrieve the liver.”

For the sake of my unknown companions in the future, now...

“.....What did you say?”

“I said go and retrieve the liver of three One Strike Bears. Ah, this is a potion that will attract monsters. You can use it to lure them.”

The potion shopkeeper smiled happily.

To an ordinary adventurer, One Strike Bear was considered a powerful foe. But to a Crimson Magic Clansman who mastered advanced magic after graduation, it was merely a source of experience points.

But, for a specific reason, I could not preserve only the liver of One Strike Bear...

...It looked like I could not work in the potion shop either.

—After leaving the shop, I felt lost again.

Troublesome, so troublesome.

I, who was regarded as a genius, could not find a job.

I even lived off the food my sister acquired somewhere. I was hopeless.

The potion shopkeeper said that I could also be a tester for new potions.

In times of desperation, I should risk my life and test the strange medicines.

But I was physically smaller and weaker than other people of my grade, would I even qualify as a lab rat?

I ran out of options. In my current disturbed condition, I couldn't find a solution.

Right, at this time there was only one thing to do.

To prepare for the event tonight, I should go back now and take a good rest.

PART 4

—Late at night. The night was quiet except for some insect noises. While the residents were already asleep, there was an explosive noise in the Home of the Crimson Magic.

Shortly after, the bell tolled to alert the entire village of an emergency.

“There it goes again!”

“I definitely won't let you off today!”

Scoldings voices echoed through the village.

The adults were angry at having their sleep disturbed. They unleashed fire magic into the sky illuminate the area.

The bright sky made it seemed like it was daytime. Two suspicious

silhouettes were moving around.

“Komekko, faster! Ouch! Komekko, don’t grab my legs. Grab my upper body!”

It was us.

“Sis, the fireworks are pretty tonight. Are we doing it again tomorrow?”

“The security should be tighter for the next few days... Never mind, if you want to see it, we’ll do it again tomorrow... Right, Komekko. You are grabbing the correct place this time, but go slightly slower...!”

After using Explosion magic in the night sky, I was exhausted to the point of immobility. Komekko was currently dragging me along.

My sister, who was still too young, could not possibly pull me along without aid.

I was placed on a sled and pulled along. The sled was too small, so part of me was protruding out.

Previously, Komekko was pulling on my lower body, so my head was on the ground. Now, I made her change to pull on my upper body...

“But if we don’t move fast, people will come, right?”

Hearing my sister, I merely moved my head slightly since I was totally exhausted. The adults continued to release magic into the sky and were slowly getting closer.

This was bad!

“Komekko, it’s fine to use more force! Retreat from here quickly!”

“Understood!”

—Currently, the Home of the Crimson Magic was troubled at being attacked by the demon king’s army.

As for the attack, it was merely making an explosive noise in the night to disturb everyone’s rest and enrage them.

What was the purpose of this meaningless harassment?

Every time they tried to catch the perpetrator in the village's surroundings, they failed.

Based on the massive explosion and the cunningness to escape capture, the village agreed unanimously that it was a terrorist attack by the cadres of the demon king's army.

The next day morning, after we returned home.

"Get out of there!"

It was early in the morning and someone was knocking on the door.

I rubbed my sleepy eyes and opened the door.

".....What is it, Yunyun. So restless in the early morning. The neighbors still need to sleep."

"Megumin, you're not in the position to say that! I have been working non-stop to find the perpetrator of yesterday's explosion!"

With heavy eye bags possibly from working overnight, Yunyun charged in as she ate her meal.

"Even if you complain to me about these, I also... The perpetrator was a cadre of the demon king's army. You should save your complaints for the perpetrator."

I immediately pretended to be ignorant. Yunyun frowned and suddenly brought her face really close.

"Eh. So Megumin thinks the recent explosions were caused by the demon king's army?"

"Of course. It must be a cadre for it to be so formidable. The responsibility is truly too heavy for Yunyun and the other villagers."

I said lightly. Yunyun narrowed her eyes.

"Eh! Even though the explosions only happened on days when Megumin went out job-hunting, this could still be explained as the work of the demon king's army!"

Yunyun grabbed my shoulders and brought her face even closer.

“Of course! What? Are you suspecting me? Yunyun, you know that I can’t move after using magic!”

After being grabbed at my shoulders, I used my brains to think of a way out of this mess. Yunyun’s mouth started moving once more.

“Eh!?!? On the morning after each explosion, Komekko who usually wakes up early would sleep through the morning. Is it really coincidental!?”

Ah, not good!

“Wh-What? Are you really suspecting me? I’m so disappointed! I’m so disappointed in Yunyun! I thought Yunyun is my friend, but you actually think of me this way! True friends definitely will not suspect each other!”

Yunyun’s eyes glowed red. Arteries appeared on her cheeks. She used both hands to hold onto my head.

“If you think you will be forgiven simply because you talk about friendship, you are totally wrong!”

“Ahahah, stop! I know, I know. My head, my genius head!”

I confessed everything to Yunyun after my head was subjected to vigorous shaking.

“Seriously! Why is Megumin doing this! Are you stupid? Although Megumin has often been regarded as a genius, you are just one step away from being an idiot, right?”

“Ugh...”

I was ordered to sit straight on the floor and listen to her lecture.

Yunyun was now part of the self-defense force.

Although the self-defense force only had a name without any resources, they would still take the initiative to investigate such special situations.

What could I say? I was probably the prime subject ever since the first explosion incident..

“I admit it was my doing this time, but as a result, I also understand now that Yunyun suspects her friends so easily. I’m so disappointed.”

“You are still at it! Anyway, you should be grateful that I am the first to know! I don’t know what others would do if they find out! If the villagers find out that the genius Megumin, in whom everyone has great expectations, learned Explosion magic, you will be finished!”

Yunyun roared angrily as I shivered in fear.

Explosion magic was a useless magic.

It consumed an amount of mana beyond what normal people possessed, and unleashed a destructive force that was over-kill.

And it required a lot of skill points to learn. Wizards would regard someone who learned it as an idiot.

I sat straight and stole a glance at Yunyun.

“Don’t you think I have been enduring for a long time? It has been almost half a year since I learned Explosion magic. Even if my tolerance is strong, it will be at its limit soon.”

“Don’t use such strange method to excuse yourself! In any case, until the disturbance dies down, you are banned from using Explosion magic, understand!”

“I will actively find a way to compensate.”

“.....”

“I, I understand! Don’t get so close. Don’t look at me like that!”

PART 5

It was inconvenient to talk outside, so I invited Yunyun into the house.

“So what are your plans for the future? Still cannot find a job?”

Yunyun caressed Chomsuke, who was curled up on the table.

Even if you asked me that, I couldn't help it without a job.

“This cannot keep up for long. As a last resort, I will have to sell my body.”

—The potion shopkeeper suggested the job of tasting new potions.

“Ah? Wh-What are you saying! Hey, Megumin. What did you just say! Pull yourself together!”

Yunyun's face turned red, then green. She panicked.

“After all, this body is all I have left. But my body is thinner and weaker than most people. I still need to ask again if I can really do it or not.”

I did not avoid the usual physical education lessons for no reason.

I had confidence that my constitution was the top in class, counting from the bottom.

Even a lab rat needed to be someone with a strong, healthy body.

But if it was to test for negative side effects, perhaps a weak body would be more suitable?

“No, no, no! Although you have a thin body, you are only 13 years old. There is still chance for growth, it's too early to give up! I think Megumin is merely suffering from malnutrition! In future, I will treat you some milk.....”

Yunyun expressed sympathy for me.

But why was she staring at my chest?

As Yunyun said, I was weaker than others because of malnutrition and lack of exercises.

But why milk?

If she was treating, I would prefer something that can fill my

stomach...

“But since the potion shopkeeper suggested this work, I think it’s better not to let down his good will.”

“That uncle looked so friendly, and yet he suggested you to do this? Unforgivable. This is exploitation!”

Yunyun was sitting calmly so far. Now she suddenly stood up, clenching her fists.

What was wrong with her? She looked like she was about to rush out and beat someone up.

Tasting new potions would be risky, but there was no need to be this angry.

What should I say? For her to be this worried about me in my time of trouble, I felt a bit embarrassed.

“Although it is because of my financial difficulty, the shopkeeper is just trying to help me... I am a bit scared and nervous, but that shopkeeper is famously good, so there shouldn’t be any serious after-effects. It merely takes about half a day. Close my eyes and it will be over. It will be very relaxing.”

“Fam-Famously good!? That uncle is famous in what aspect? He already had children. This is unbelievable!”

I wanted to humor her, but I didn’t think she would get even angrier.

Yunyun’s eyes turned bright red in excitement.

What? Why was she so angry?

Did she think that since the shopkeeper had children of his own, he should not treat the children of other families as lab rats to test new potions?

“N-No problem, Yunyun. A few months ago, I had my 13th birthday, so I’m not a child anymore. And the shopkeeper also said he wants to test it on youths of this age...”

The medicine was probably used to inoculate youths of my age

against sickness.

“Unforgivable, absolutely unforgivable! To think he wants to test it on youths of Megumin’s age? I will burn down his unethical shop!”

“Wait! Yunyun is really strange today. What’s wrong? Wait!”

PART 6

I strolled along with Yunyun in the village, although Chomsuke felt a bit heavy on my shoulder.

“Seriously! I already sensed this some time ago, Yunyun is too horny! Why must I do those immoral work!”

“Bu-But, but! It is because Megumin said it in such an ambiguous manner!”

Later, we discovered that we weren’t on the same page, so the misunderstanding was cleared up.

“When I said a weak body, I meant an unhealthy body due to malnutrition! Not puberty development! Since you have become more developed recently, you start to look down on others. So rude!”

“Then, why did you let me treat you milk! I thought it was strange! Someone would actually be sexually interested in the underdeveloped Megumin!”

“Ah, you really dare! Although my body is underdeveloped, it is still very welcomed in certain circles! On the other hand, Yunyun’s body is not as developed as Arue’s, yet is not as humble as mine. It is just sitting on the fence, yet you still can look down on others. How infuriating!”

“You say sitting on the fence. You say I’m sitting on the fence?”

Yunyun, who was walking in front, suddenly turned around.

“Yes! Your body is sitting on the fence, so is your magic! Any male demand for you would also be sitting on the fence... Ah, what do you want to do!”

“You this...!”

Teary-eyed Yunyun seized and hugged me, causing Chomsuke to fall off my shoulder.

I grabbed Chomsuke’s neck and put it back on my shoulder. To prevent falling off again, it held on tightly with its claws.

Yunyun saw our actions and stopped as well.

“...Really. Stop making me worry.”

She still grumbled unhappily.

“Oh, you are worried about me, your rival?”

“Eh? N-No...! I just thought that if you cannot find a job and use Explosion magic to vent frustrations, it will create trouble for me! Okay, let’s go!”

Proud Yunyun walked before me.

After our chat about the potion shop.

I discussed with Yunyun about the money needed for travelling and job-hunting. Eventually, she decided to accompany me to find a job.

No matter what, Yunyun was a kind-hearted, gullible kid.

But after being rejected by all the workshops in the village, I felt there was no job left...

“This is it! This shop is very busy in the afternoon, but there is only the shopkeeper working here. The work must be tiring for him, so he will surely hire you! Ever since we graduated, I feel lonely eating alone, so I often sit on this long bench to eat and watch others.”

Yunyun brought me to the village’s famous restaurant.

Yunyun and I sat on the bench not far from the restaurant, and observed the situation from a distance.

I unintentionally heard Yunyun’s sad history and decided not to ask about it.

“Well, this shop is indeed popular. Maybe I can be hired, but...”

Hearing I broke off my sentence, Yunyun tilted her head.

“Is there a problem? The shopkeeper is a friendly person. When I sat on this bench to eat my packed meal, he even kindly said to me, ‘It is cold outside, come and eat inside the shop’...”

“Your story is too depressing, so please stop. By the way, couldn’t you just sit inside the shop and order food normally? ...I feel that shop may be unsuitable because... Other than magic item and potion workshops, other shops have a very low wage, right?”

“You are so picky, that’s why you cannot find a job! If you don’t get a job to earn money, you will never be able to travel! What about your dream to meet the big sister in the long robes? Faster, let’s go!”

Well... She had a point.

Yunyun took my unwilling hand and approached the shop.

“—Sorry to bother you, I would like to work here.”

We waited until there were less customers and the shopkeeper looked free.

I applied to the uncle for an interview.

By the way, Yunyun was very enthusiastic earlier, but when she met the shopkeeper whom she wasn’t close to, she withdrew. In the end, I must approach him by myself.

Yunyun originally intended to support and cheer me on, yet now she was nervously hiding behind me.

“Oh, isn’t this Hyoizaburo’s daughter... Megumin, right? Want to work at my shop? No problem, but I cannot afford a wage like that of a magic item or potion workshop though.”

“It doesn’t matter! I can wash dishes or whatever! Please hire me!”

A genius like me was working in a restaurant...

Although my intention was to do a magic-related job, this would have

to do.

But I had no clue on finding that big sister in the long robes, so there was no need to rush.

It was fine to be a waitress and slowly earn money.

Since I often took care of Komekko in my parents' absence, I was well-versed in cooking.

Compared to collecting potion ingredients, being a waitress was relaxing—

“After peeling the potatoes, wash the dishes, then take out the Onion Duck meat from the refrigerator!”

“I’m on it!”

I was a fool to think this job was so simple.

—Lunchtime, the shop’s busiest time belt.

There were only a few food stores in the Home of the Crimson Magic.

This popular shop became like a battlefield.

I juggled the duties to peel the potatoes and wash the plates.

For some reasons, even Yunyun was by my side, attentively cutting cabbages. She did not need to work, yet she was assigned a role anyway.

“Megumin, there are customers. Stop washing the dishes and take their orders!”

“Okay!”

I was so busy that my world seemed to be spinning.

Take orders from the new customers, then back to washing the dishes...

“Bring these two set meals over! Then take the orders from the new customers!”

“Okay. I’m going over!”

I brought the set meals to the customers, then quickly took orders from the newcomers.

“Welcome...”

I was about to smile at the customers, greet them and take the orders—

“Let me see, what to order... Eh? Isn’t it Megumin!”

“Eh? Really. Megumin, you are working here?”

...The new customers were Funifura and Dodonko.

Their lines of sight shifted from the menu in their hands to me, who was wearing an apron and a waitress costume. They smiled maliciously.

What were they planning in this busy period? Hurry up and place the orders!

I didn’t know if they could sense my mood. Funifura looked at me from head to toe.

“Your dress is so cute, waitress. Cough... cough, cough...! Megumin! The genius in our class is wearing an apron and smiling at customers...! Hahaha!”

“Smiling and welcoming people! Hahaha! Our pretentious genius used to be too good to form a group during physical education lesson! Hey, give us another smile!”

.....

“Then, customers, please place your orders...”

Both of them banged on the table as they looked at me and laughed. I could feel my arteries almost bursting on my cheek.

Endure, endure.

Crimson Magic Clansmen never backed down from a fight.

This was the clan's unquestionable standard, but this was a restaurant. And I was currently working.

Revenge would have to wait after work.

After all, it was hard to find this job. If I dealt with them rashly, it would be too childish.

Funifura and Dodonko seemed to be bored of me not retorting. They finally started ordering.

"Hey, Megumin. What are the chef's recommendations here?"

"Ah, me too. But I want something different from Funifura."

Chef's recommendations.

The owner said they were...

"Today's recommendations are Seasonal Fried Vegetable set meal and Onion Duck's Onion Soup And Rice set meal..."

"Oh. I want River Fish set meal."

"I want the daily set meal here."

I almost rushed over to beat them up.

Endure, endure. Must endure.

After work, I would definitely seek vengeance.

Against the brocon Funifura who doted on her brother, I would make some groundless accusations about her brother.

Against cowardly Dodonko, I would pretend to be a ghost and scare her when she was alone.

I secretly made my plans.

"Messing with you is boring. Forget it, quickly serve the dish."

"Yes, I'm hungry. Messing with Megumin won't fill my belly."

Both of them said as if they were bored.

Good. I managed to endure. Even I could grow and improve.

By the way, they had not paid yet.

This shop required payment first.

“River Fish set meal costs 700 eris. Daily set meal costs 600 eris.”

I announced the prices. They looked at each other, and smiled maliciously.

“Back in school, you always cheat Yunyun. Now at work, if you don’t at least give a treat, there could be retribution.”

“Good idea! Uncle, the cost of the meals will be deducted from Megumin’s pay...Ughh!”

“Hey! We were wrong! We admit our mistake! Stop casting magic!”

PART 7

“You are too impetuous! Although Funifura and Dodonko were wrong, you only started working for less than an hour! To use magic in the shop, what were you thinking! It was good that nobody noticed it. If someone who knew the incantation heard you, he would know you are going to unleash Explosion magic! Then, the explosion incidents, which are being blamed on the demon king’s army, will be revealed to have been your doing!”

“I know. I’m reflecting on my mistake...”

My casting was interrupted by other customers, so I used other methods to get at them.

A nearby customer was eating mixed stew set meal— I forced the hot stew into both their mouths.

They cried and went away. Naturally, I was...

“Sacked again. It looked like there really was no job suitable for me...”

I said to Yunyun dejectedly. After all, I couldn’t even find a job that

was not magic-related.

“I thought of something else! Megumin should be able to do that job.”

Yunyun suggested another location for work.

PART 8

—Heavy clouds congregated in the sky. It looked like it was about to rain.

At this time, three serious-looking Crimson Magic Clansmen stood afar, holding their staffs.

“I’m going to start!”

A big sister shouted from a distance.

At the same time, the other people separated in different locations raised their hands, signaling back.

Seeing the signal, the big sister who shouted earlier set her staff on the ground...!

“Feed upon the power that is mine, bestow upon this earth a bumper harvest! Earth Shaker!”

Following the exaggerated speech, she loudly chanted the incantation.

She was probably channeling all her mana into this magic.

The big sister activated a powerful earth magic, encompassing every bit of ground in her sight within the area of effect!

The ground rose and shook, as if it was a pulsing artery.

The earth moved as the caster willed. The broad land before me was being cultivated.

...Correct. This was merely to plough the land.

They were merely shouting exaggerated speeches, expending their

vast mana, and ploughing the land.

Another man took the opportunity and walked forward with a big box.

He put the box on the ground, raised his staff, and shouted seriously.

“Go berserk, atmosphere and wind! As I will it, let the raging winds dance! Tornado!”

The wind magic filled the air with quavering power, swirling up the box content and scattering them towards the ploughed land.

Yes, this was scattering seeds using wind magic.

He watched in satisfaction at the scattered seeds and nodded towards the last person.

“With my full power, let the natural order be twisted and the weather be in my hands! Control of Weather!”

Following his speech, the dark clouds in the sky started to rain.

The thing that was burning since earlier seemed to be used for preparation of the rain magic.

.....Watering the planted seeds.

They were indeed engaging in normal farming activities, but it involved using powerful magic to complete by exhausting their mana.

—The food source of the entire Home of the Crimson Magic was provided by around 10 farmers.

The village contained hundreds of people.

The food for hundreds of people was being produced before my eyes in the open agricultural district.

This was a “waste”, right?

If those great adventurers saw high level Crimson Magic Clansmen using magic just to plough the land, they would find the waste of magic unbearable—

—Instead of using magic in this place, why not use it to fight the demon king's army!

“Let's stop here today! My mana is almost exhausted. We will join in the harvest too! Part-timers, please take care of the rest!”

The big sister who started using magic first earlier said to us.

Yunyun said the job was to harvest vegetables.

Ploughing, watering, etc could be done with magic, but harvesting required manual labor.

Yunyun and I went to help, working together with the mana-exhausted farmers.

In the field on the other side, the high quality potatoes came together to resist harvest. Yunyun was engaged in a bitter fight.

Attacked by the potatoes en masse, Yunyun fell down after being hit on the knee.

After being played by the vegetables, Yunyun was probably angry and drew her dagger. I glanced at her and went to the onion field for which I was responsible.

The vegetables were rather lively this year.

I readjusted my mood and held the onion tightly at the root. As I was about to cut it with a sickle...

—I was suddenly slapped in the face by the onion.

.....

“Hey, you two. This is an important commodity. Don't damage it while harvesting.”

The big sister reminded us when she saw we were about to beat up the vegetables.

—After a few hours of battling the vegetables, we finally finished the harvest in our assigned field.

.....Farming was really difficult.

Need to wake up early to drive off insects and beasts. Even harvesting required combat.

I finally understood why the farmers in Home of the Crimson Magic had the highest level in the entire village.

“Good work, both of you! Well done on your first day. This is your pay. If possible, come again tomorrow!”

I took the money from the big sister and went home with Yunyun, dragging along our muddied bodies.

It was already evening.

Before I left home in the morning, I prepared breakfast and lunch for Komekko. She was probably getting hungry now.

“Uh... I don't want to see any more potatoes for some time... Why do they keep attacking my knees? ...Vegetables that are smarter than monsters are really annoying...!”

Yunyun was knocked down repeatedly by the potatoes. She wiped the mud from her cheeks with her sleeves and cried.

“But we leveled as a result, not bad... I didn't know farming would be that difficult...”

Both Yunyun and I had leveled.

I was rather amused to have leveled from harvesting vegetables. But this merely showed that today's vegetables were very lively and were considered tough opponents.

Today's pay was 4,000 eris.

It was considered a high wage for a few hours of work.

...But it was still far from my target of 300,000 eris.

And harvesting work cannot be sustained for long.

I sighed helplessly.

“.....Might as well sell my body.....”

“What did you say!?”

I listened to Yunyun as I reflected on today's event.

Funifura and Dodonko making trouble, being provoked by onions...

At this time, I really wanted to vent my frustrations with Explosion magic.

I considered as I walked home with Yunyun. Suddenly, I realized something.

Previously, I let Komekko dragged me home after I exhausted my mana.

I unleashed my magic in the village because I could not bring Komekko into the dangerous areas outside the village.

But now...

“My reliable Yunyun, I will like you to help me with something.”

“Re-Reliable? What's wrong, Megumin? You were always like “I'm Number 1”. It is so rare for you to honestly praise someone else.”

So that was the impression other people had of me.

“.....I will praise others occasionally too. And thank them as well. Thank you for accompanying me at work!”

“It, it's nothing... Anyway, what is the matter?”

Yunyun blushed shyly and tilted her head.

“I hope you can keep me company for a while. Want to have a date with me over there?”

I smiled.





PART 9

“Ahhh! Stupid, stupid! I’m so stupid! I know Megumin is an idiot, but I’m even more idiotic than her today!”

In the forest close to the village, Yunyun shouted in tears.

“Compared to a ridiculously clever person, isn’t a somewhat stupid child more lovable?”

“So noisy, shut up! Ah, seriously, Megumin, hold on tight! Or you will fall off!”

Yunyun was running in the forest.

Of course, I was laying on her back.

“Yunyun’s back is so broad. Really reliable.”

A lizard monster with blood-red scales was chasing us in rage.

It looked like it was enraged after being blown off by my Explosion magic.

“I thought that this would be slightly better than using magic in the village. I was a fool! I wish I could scold myself from several minutes ago!”

“Don’t blame yourself, Yunyun. As someone who would not refuse others, you are really attractive.”

“I’m really going to toss you down! Ah, mummy!”

—If Yunyun was around, she could carry me home.

Thereafter, Yunyun accompanied me to unleash Explosion magic. Unfortunately, the chosen location was bad, and I blew off a sleeping Fire Drake.

Therefore, we were in our current situation.

Yunyun carried me, who was totally exhausted, on her back as she cried and ran through the forest. Even with me as a burden, her pacing was steady.

She was truly an all-rounded, excellent student.

“Sometimes, I will even mistake Yunyun for a guy. You are reliable in times of crisis. Although you will grumble somewhat, you still endure my willfulness.”

“Shut up! If we are talking about masculinity, you are more like a guy than me! You have short hair and are underdeveloped... Ouch, ouch! Don’t pull my hair at this time!”

Hearing her mention of puberty development, I intentionally pulled her hair, causing her to scream.

This probably disrupted her balance, causing her to trip over a tree root and fall over.

Naturally, I was thrown off her back.

Chomsuke released its claws on my shoulder and jumped down agilely.

“Ouch, ouch... this is all Megumin’s fault!”

“What? It is because Yunyun mocked my body’s characteristics...! Ah, it is catching up, carry me fast!”

“.....I really want to abandon you.”

While Yunyun was bitterly considering the matter, the angry Fire Drake arrived.

“This is bad. Yunyun, be prepared to fight here! There is only one, and the Fire Drake is the weakest among the powerful monsters near the village! As long as you avoid its fire breath, Yunyun can win this!”

“Although I may win! But for Megumin who is facing the floor, saying such things is just too weak!”

Yunyun drew her dagger and confronted the Fire Drake.

In order to observe the fight, I turned my body to face upwards with some difficulty.

After turning around, there was conveniently a tree root nearby to raise my head, so I could see the fight.

The Fire Drake is a large reptilian monster, crawling on the ground with four legs.

It looked up at Yunyun and showed its red tongue to intimidate...

No, that was not a tongue.

This monster was true to its name. It could breath fire, although the small fire this time was merely meant to intimidate an enemy.

“It did not attack immediately after catching up, so... Yunyun, the enemy is afraid of us.”

“What ‘us’? It is only me it is wary of! But the culprit who blew it away with magic is currently lying helplessly next to me, it probably won’t give up!”

Yunyun stared at the lizard and said.

At this time, I suddenly felt a weight on my belly. I looked down and

saw Chomsuke curled up leisurely on my body.

“...At this time, it is still rather calm.”

“Isn’t it just like its owner!”

The Fire Drake came closer to a fighting position. Yunyun did not move her line of sight. She held her dagger in one hand and reached out with the other hand.

She was only four meters away from the Fire Drake.

The enemy could attack at any moment.

“Freeze Gust!”

Following her incantation, the air around the lizard turned chilly.

She used intermediate magic to create a cold mist.

Snow formed on the lizard, turning its red scales to snow white.

Its thrashing tail slowly drooped.

Reptilian monsters were scared of cold.

For unknown reasons, using ice magic on reptilian monsters would slow them down. This was common knowledge among wizards.

But even though the lizard’s movements were slower in the cold, it continued to come closer.

Yunyun noticed this and was preparing another magic to finish it off... Suddenly, two reinforcements appeared behind that lizard.

“Oh, it realized it cannot win, so it summoned help. We have me, Yunyun, and Chomsuke on our side. So we are evenly matched in terms of numbers... It looks like there is no need for me to act. Yunyun, finish them off.”

“Stop spouting nonsense while lying on the floor! Run away! I could still deal with one, but fighting three monsters and protecting the helpless Megumin is really beyond me...! Freeze Gust! Freeze Gust! ...Megumin, we escape now! While they were slowed down, I could

escape even with Megumin on my back!”

After using magic on the two newcomers, Yunyun backed off, grabbed my arm, and supported me with her shoulder.

Chomsuke used its claws to hold tightly to avoid being abandoned. As Yunyun put me on her back...

And was about to run away, the lizard breathed a large burst of flame!

“Hot! Hot, hot, hot! Yunyun, it’s too hot! Us-Use ice magic! Use ice magic on me! Is my back on fire!”

“It-It’s fine! Just the edge of your robe is burning! We are running away!”

Yunyun carried me and sprinted off. Realizing our intentions, the lizards breathed fire again.

But the flame did not reach Yunyun. My back on the other hand...

“Ahah! Yunyun, my back, my back!”

“Don’t move about! I almost fell! A bit further and it will be fine!”

Yunyun adjusted her grip on me and said without looking back.

“Yunyun! They’re coming, more reinforcements! This is really bad. Run!”

“I know! Don’t grab so tightly, it is hard to run like this! Ah, seriously! I won’t accompany you to do such things ever again!”

PART 10

Yunyun and I escaped the lizards and arrived at the village. The villagers must have heard the sound of Explosion magic, so there was a slight disturbance.

It looked like even the forest was not far enough from the village.

“Oh! Megumin, Yunyun, are you okay? Why do you look so pathetic?”

What happened?”

As a patrol of the so-called self-defense force, Buzucoily discovered our charred appearances.

My school uniform, which I usually used as personal clothes, was badly burnt by the lizards.

What do I do now? I only have this set of clothes...

“Uh, we...”

Yunyun, who was still carrying me, did not know how to explain.

I came down from her back, using her shoulder for support.

“We were training our levels in the forest and suddenly encountered the legendary Explosion Demon.”

“Eh!?” X2

Buzucoily shouted in surprise.

“Why is Yunyun surprised so well!?”

“No-Nothing!”

Yunyun, who also exclaimed with Buzucoily, hurriedly shook her head.

“That Explosion Demon is as the legends say. It must be a cadre of the demon king’s army. Yunyun and I fought it valiantly, but it still managed to escape, so we came back.”

“What! ...Ah, so Megumin exhausted her mana, losing strength in her limbs! ...Even the genius with vast mana, Megumin, became like this. The enemy must be quite powerful!”

“That’s right. That... must be a demon! A female demon with a sexy body and horns!”

“You are lying through your teeth...!”

Yunyun whispered into my ears as I leaned on her shoulder.

This way, no matter how many Explosion magic were used in the future, they would all be blamed on the female demon.

My only decent clothes were ruined. This appearance looked as if I was in a difficult battle, making what I said more credible.

“It’s good that both of you came back alive then. Leave the rest to us. Go home and rest.”

“Yes... Ah, if you see some frost-covered Fire Drakes in the forests, please kill them quickly. They are very aggressive and would be trouble if left unchecked!”

“Ah, is it... okay, I’ll get rid of them if they are encountered.”

I entrusted my revenge for my ruined school uniform to Buzucoily and reminded him to be careful.

“That Explosion Demon is strong, please be careful.”

—Although this character did not even exist.

“Ah, I know... By the way, it should be Detonation Demon, not Explosion Demon, right? The name Explosion Demon sounds as if it could use Explosion magic.”

“Uh, uh... During the fight earlier, the opponent used Explosion magic in the end...!”

Hearing my explanation, Buzucoily laughed aloud.

“Explosion magic? Hahaha. That fellow is nuts! A cadre of the demon king’s army learned this useless magic! I heard some immortal liches or demons may learn Explosion magic for fun since they got too many skill points... Even so, she wouldn’t use Explosion magic!”

“That-That’s true.”

I patronized Buzucoily as I tried to control my mouth from twitching. I said to Yunyun, who was suppressing her laughter.

“Let’s go quickly, Yunyun! Komekko is starving at home!”

I urged Yunyun to leave quickly.

“Sigh. I’m so tired today... You are banned from using Explosion magic for a while.”

“...How long is ‘for a while’? Until the day after tomorrow?”

“‘For a while’ means ‘for a while’! What day after tomorrow! That’s too soon!”

“That is very difficult for me. If I don’t use Explosion magic for one day, I will die...”

“If you mess around again, I will strangle you!”

—With Yunyun’s support, I finally arrived at my home. I sat by the door as I listened to her lectures.

Mana exhaustion. I felt like not moving at all for the rest of the day.

Yunyun probably wanted to go home early too, so she didn’t grumble anymore.

Then, she bashfully played with her fingers and whispered.

“Again, Megumin... Then, tomorrow...”

“Yes. Come along with me for work. I cannot harvest those vegetables by myself.”

Yunyun smiled, nodded in satisfaction, and went home.

She was so easy to deal with. I was getting more and more worried about Yunyun’s future.

I sat by the door and shouted into the house.

“Komekko! Sis is home!”

Komekko heard and ran over quickly.

“NEET Sis is back! Make food quickly!”

“Komekko, sis is not a NEET anymore. I worked today, so I am really tired. My body is dirty. I should take a bath first. Can you boil some water for me?”

“Okay!”

Komekko ran to boil water. This kid is too energetic.

The bath utilized mana to start the fire.

It was considered a high quality magic item elsewhere, but it was just a common household item in this village.

It requires a fair amount of mana, but my sister could already use it easily.

Perhaps she possessed even more talent than me.

I pondered as I sloppily lay down in the corridor. Chomsuke moved from its fixed position on my shoulder down to my belly.

Recently, it was getting more and more impolite.

...I ruffled its head. At this time,

“Sorry for the bother at this time of the night— Is anyone there?”

Someone knocked on the door. A feminine voice said from beyond the door.

I couldn’t recognize this voice.

“The door is open. Please come in.”

The door opened slowly.

I sat up and looked at the person who spoke.

She was about 20 years old.

A red haired beauty was covered in dirt as if she had been travelling for a long time. She was dressed like an adventurer, specifically a wizard.

This woman glanced at me, then slowly lowered her gaze—

When she saw Chomsuke on my belly, she suddenly knelt on the floor.

She lowered her head as her falling hair obscured her expression.

Her face was covered by her hair, so I did not know what expression she was making.

She seemed very excited. Her voice trembled softly.

“After a long journey, I have finally found you! Great master!”



INTERLUDE: SCENE 1

Lady Aqua, I Would Not Let Him Escape!

Alcanretia, the City of Water and Hot Springs.

In this place where nobody except Axis Cultists would come close—

In the city center stood a great cathedral.

In this place where nobody except Axis Cultists would come close—

“May I help you? Do you wish to join Axis Cult? Or just here for a chat? You look quite handsome, so I will permit you give me a treat. But don’t think I’m a frivolous woman, it’s just a treat, okay?”

“No, I’m not here for a chat. I’m here to find a healer to join my party. Our goal is to defeat the demon king.”

The youth said something really strange.

“What a fresh way to strike a conversation. There’s a nice café nearby, let’s go there to drink and chat. Ah, my name is Cecily, the beautiful priest of Axis Cult.”

“Eh. Hm, Miss Cecily? I said I wasn’t here to chat...”

Then, I noticed there was something hanging by the waist of this cool youth.

“Oh. Is that a magic sword hanging by your waist? ...To possess a magic sword. Are you a powerful adventurer? You should quite rich then... I love grass jelly slime. It’s sticky, mushy, and soft, so delicious.”

“Uh, no... I’m here to look for a companion...”

“By the way, I like handsome guys who are younger than me. Of course, pretty girls are fine too! A handsome young man with a magic sword like you should rate even higher!”

“...No, sorry, uh, sorry for bothering you...!? Mi-Miss Cecily!? Can you take your hands off me?”

I did not understand why the magic sword guy wanted to run away.

“Just call me Sister Cecily would do!”

“Sorry, I have to go... Ce-Miss Cecily! Please let go of me. I will give you money to buy grass jelly slime!”

He said and tried to remove my hand from his cloak with some difficulty.

“I won’t let my handsome magic swordsman escape this easily! After ordering all the grass jelly slime in bulk two days ago, I’m bankrupt! But this couldn’t be helped, since it was a limited edition wind grape flavor! Although I love grass jelly slime, eating it daily is still unbearable! I want to eat some solid food! As a priestess of the cathedral, I get a monthly salary, but this also means I am not qualified to receive the charity of the church to the poor!”

“I know! I know! So stop pulling on my belt! My pants will drop! Really will drop...!”

The youth hurriedly grabbed hold of my hands as I held on to his belt to prevent him from escaping.

But he did not run away or remove my hands. His resistance was weak.

“Eheh. You say that, but your body is honest to what it wants! Why aren’t you resisting!?”

“Be-Because a powerful diviner in Home of the Crimson Magic once told me, ‘You will meet a priest from Axis Cult, who will become an important person to the fate of the world. You must protect this person at all costs.’ Otherwise, I would have run away long ago!”

“...A diviner in Home of the Crimson Magic said so? You will meet a pretty priestess who will become important to you? Become someone you must protect at all costs?”

“No, how do I say this, the details are a bit different... The divination did not mention ‘pretty’ and it wasn’t someone ‘important to me’...”

I held onto his hand with both hands.

I would not let you escape.

Definitely not.

“Uh, Miss Cecily, are you listening? She only said ‘An Axis Cult priest that I will meet’, it does not necessarily mean it is you...”

“Ah, Lady Aqua! You have given me with this rich, handsome guy just as I am low on cash! I’m so blessed! I will let him feed and take care of me!”

The youth dislodged my hands and ran away. I pursued with all my might.

—Lady Aqua, I would not let him escape!

Chapter 2

THE RED-HAIRED SERVITOR



PART 1

Her shoulders shivered as she bowed her head, staying low without

rising.

She just addressed me as “great master”.

What was happening? What was she talking about?

But if I asked “Who are you?” to someone in the throes of emotion, it would spoil the mood.

And this feeling was pretty nice. I would play along for a bit.

“So the reception is finally here...”

Hearing my soft voice, the woman raised her head.

She had a serious, yet beautiful face.

Her yellow, cat-like eyes stared from between her red hair.

She tilted her head in confusion as she looked at me and said.

“...When I heard that your seal has been broken, I rushed here from a long distance away. Since the seal was recently broken, it is possible that your memories have yet to be fully restored... Your loyal servant Anis is here to pay her respect. I will be your hands, and will risk my life to defend you.”

Anis bowed her head deeply once more.

—My seal was broken.

I couldn't remember any such thing, but this loyal servant said that my memories may still be lost due to the seal being broken only recently.

What was I?

No, I felt this before.

I felt that I was different from the others.

I had mana unmatched by anyone else.

And my genius intellect.

...Now, the mystery was solved.

This subordinate who called herself Anis was no ordinary minion.

Her lowered hood was probably hiding something.

From the look of her actions and her gaze, she must be a fairly competent person.

“...You have been troubled to come so far. I’ll be in your care, Anis.”

“Sure. Although I don’t know who you are, please leave my master’s affairs to me.”

.....

“I am not your master who was sealed?”

“No, no. Did you have a reason for someone to seal you?”

Of course, there wasn’t any...

“Then, you said you wanted to welcome...”

“The one who is sleeping on your belly.”

.....What?

“I have been living with this furball for half a year, so I have some feelings for it. I’m very troubled if you say you are here to take it away.”

“To call my great master a furball and have feelings for it... I’m grateful to you for taking care of my master so far, but shouldn’t you respect my master’s wishes?”

Anis said to me with a serious expression.

Chomsuke, who was sleeping on my belly, yawned and glanced at Anis.

“.....It doesn’t look like it wants to go with you.”

“Ahah!? Lady Wolbach!?”

Chomsuke twisted slightly to the side and slept on my belly again.

I said as I scratched the neck of this shameless furball who still intended to sleep under such circumstances.

“Since this kid wants to stay here, it can’t be helped. I will take care of this furball. You don’t have to worry.”

“PI- PI- Please wait! Uh, Lady Wolbach!? Lady Wolbach! It’s me. I’m Anis! Come, let’s go back with me, okay?”

Anis said hurriedly to persuade it, but Chomsuke merely purred and curled up as I stroke its chin.

“As you can see, this kid seemed satisfied with its current life. Please go back.”

“PI- Please wait! Please convince Lady Wolbach to go back with me! Even though it looks like this now, it should be able to understand our language!”

I said to Anis, who continued pestering me.

“This kid’s name is Chomsuke. How could it understand human language? This is just a normal cat.”

“Chom- Chomsuke? Chomsuke!? It doesn’t seem possible, but you can’t be referring to Lady Wolbach!?”

Anis stared in disbelief and shouted.

Why couldn’t it be referring to my cat?

“Isn’t it a great name?”

“Please stop. You must address it as Lady Wolbach! Ahah... If Lady Wolbach actually believes this weird name is her name... What should I do? How do I fix this...”

Anis was on the verge of tears as she saw her master responding to the name “Chomsuke” repeatedly.

She was so rude to call it a weird name.

I thought it was better than that Wol-whatever name.

“This kid is not your master Wolbach, but my important family member Chomsuke. And it wants to stay here of its own volition, so please go back.”

“It’s Lady Wolbach... This is really troubling. Can you please hand him over to me? Of course, I didn’t come here empty-handed. Take it as a thank-you gift for protecting Lady Wolbach...”

Anis said as she searched herself for something.

This was an insult.

Chomsuke was already an important family member.

To trade it away for money...!

“Let me see. Although I currently only have 300,000 eris...”

“No, no. That’s enough. Chomsuke, this person is your new guardian. Be good.”

I picked up Chomsuke and handed it over to Anis.

Sensing what was happening, Chomsuke extended its claws to hold onto my clothes.

I engaged in an intense battle with Chomsuke, who was unwilling to let off...!

“Hm, hm... Lady Wolbach really doesn’t want to leave. Besides, you may need some time to say goodbye, so I will come again tomorrow. Both of you enjoy each other’s company for tonight.”

Anis suggested after seeing our situation.

She then handed over a heavy sack.

It contained a lot of eris coins.

I was dumbstruck. Anis bowed her head to me.

“Then, please take care of Lady Wolbach. I will come to get her tomorrow.”

She said and left.

PART 2

After Anis left.

“Komekko, say good bye to this furball today. Take this opportunity to do so.”

I said to Komekko as I ate my dinner.

Komekko was chewing on her food enthusiastically. Upon hearing that, her hamster-like face changed.

Komekko silently swallowed the food in her mouth and turned towards Chomsuke, who was eating her leftover fish bones. She placed her hands together as if in prayer.

“...Farewell, Chomsuke. I will taste you tomorrow morning. I won’t leave anything uneaten.”

“No! It’s not like that, Komekko! You won’t be eating it! It won’t be made into tomorrow’s breakfast!”

My sister was really scary.

To think that she would consider Chomsuke, who had been living with us for half a year, as breakfast without hesitation or conflict.

Komekko tilted her head slightly.

“Then what? It has grown so big, yet we are releasing it?”

“We are going to sell it at high price.”

“That’s my sister! So resourceful! We can buy a lot of food!”

This kid was inhumane— although it wasn’t really my place to say.

Was she like me?

Maybe it would be better to be a bit more self-dignified.

I was troubled and looked on helplessly at Komekko, who was

dancing in joy.

“Well. Today will be the last day to play with Chommy. Chommy, come here.”

Komekko had not been putting Chomsuke in the pot lately, so it had been sticking closely to her. Chomsuke came over obediently into her arms.

Rather than “sticking closely”, it was probably “obeying subserviently”.

“.....(Hiss)”

“!?”

Komekko had just finished dinner, yet she was swallowing her saliva. Looking at her, Chomsuke shivered in her arms.

It would yield without resistance even when subjected to annoying things like pulling its ears or tail.

Looking at Chomsuke who had completely given up, I wondered if I was doing the right thing.

The reward of 300,000 eris was exactly the amount for the travel fee to Alcanretia.

This meant that I could go on a journey even without working.

But I still got some feelings for this mysterious furball.

Yet if I left it at home, it would be eaten by Komekko when I left on my journey.

If I brought this small furball along, it would probably be eaten by monsters.

I wanted to make it my familiar previously, but now that I had feelings for it, I was worried about its safety.

In many ways, giving it to Anis was the best option.

.....

Who was Anis? And what was this furball?

Perhaps we might be dragged into a serious affair...

“Sis, can a cat regrow its tail after it gets cut?”

“It’s not a lizard, it won’t regrow... so don’t eat its tail because today is the last day, okay?”

.....What exactly was my little sister?

—The next day.

Since this was the last day, I gave a whole fish to Chomsuke as breakfast.

Komekko stared at the fish and brought her face so close that her nose could almost touch it. Chomsuke ate the fish nervously before her.

After breakfast, I carried Chomsuke onto my knees as I waited for Anis. At this time, someone was knocking on the closed door.

Hearing the knocks, I exerted a bit more force on the hand carrying Chomsuke.

Perhaps it was uncomfortable, Chomsuke cried out softly. I told myself that this was the best choice.

“...Goodbye then. Your name is not that weird Wolwhatever that she was calling you. You are Chomsuke. I went through the trouble of giving you such a cool name, don’t forget it, okay?”

“Meow.”

As if it could understand human language, Chomsuke cried out softly in my arms.

Good, this was fine.

I couldn’t feed it as an adventurer, yet I would be worried if it was left at home.

It should be better to give it to Anis instead of finding someone to

care for it.

She would take care of it.

“.....Even if you recover your memories, you mustn't seek revenge on my little sister, okay?”

“Meow.”

I carried Chomsuke up to my face. It brought its face close until its nose was nearly touching me, and snorted.

Really, this cat was shameless.

Recently, it became more like someone. It didn't react much even when something serious happened.

This cat might be a bright future.

The door was knocked again. I shouted, “Please come in.” to whoever was outside.

.....Goodbye.

I listened to the sound of the door opening.

“This kid likes dark places. It likes to eat fish skin. Please take care of it.”

I handed Chomsuke over—

—To Yunyun, who was standing dumbly at the door.

“Eh? Wh- Why do I have to take care of Chomsuke... Ah, it hurts!? I say, Megumin, what are you doing! Why am I being hit!? Stop!”

After I made the hard decision to sincerely say my farewell, the mood was spoilt. I vented my frustrations on Yunyun.

“What is the meaning of this? I was just making such an emotional farewell speech! Why are you here so early in the morning!?”

“What are you saying!? You are even making a false counterchange!? Didn't we agree yesterday that I will help you with the work today!?”

Yunyun held back her tears in a bewildered expression.

Oh yes, we made that agreement yesterday. I forgot about it completely.

I showed Yunyun the sack of coins given by Anis last night.

“Look. I was lucky last night to have found 300,000 eris... It hurts!?”

As I was speaking, Yunyun slapped me.

“You finally did it, Megumin! I believed in you, that you won’t commit crimes even though you have financial difficulties! Idiot! Why didn’t you discuss with me first!?”

Ah? Wait—!?

“Wh- What are you saying? I didn’t commit any crime! This money came from a transaction made between two willing parties...!”

My cheek was so painful that I became teary.

I said as I held onto my cheek.

“Transaction? You said a transaction!? Megumin has nothing valuable. How could you make 300,000 eris in one night..... Ahhhh!?”

Yunyun suddenly thought of something and cried out loudly.

“Wh- What? Since just now, you...!?”

“Idiot! You finally sold your body!? I told you to value yourself more! Who was it!? Who was the person who accepted this foolish transaction!? Quick, tell me! I won’t forgive him!”

“Ah!? It hurts, wait—!?Ahhh!”

“Ah...!? It hurts, it hurts, it hurts—!”

After being slapped a few times, I finally couldn’t endure it any further and seized Yunyun tightly.

PART 3

“Seriously, have some common sense! I won’t sell my body so easily! Why must Yunyun, who would be led astray easily by a slightly gentle guy, worry about me so much! This money was obtained in a legal and mutually-satisfied manner!”

“If- If he is just slightly gentle, I won’t be led astray! I already apologized! Anyway, I made such a mistake because Megumin said something about selling her body yesterday...!”

After a great battle, we lay at the doorway as our bodies were covered with scratch wounds.

“It is all because Megumin, who always grumbled about poverty, suddenly earned so much money in one night! If it wasn’t a crime, how could there be so much money!?”

Yunyun collapsed on floor in at doorway, stretching out her legs as if she had given up.

Chomsuke used to avoid Yunyun when it saw her. It seemed to have gotten used to her now, climbing onto her knees as if it belonged there.

Similarly, I stretched out my legs and lay down.

“Actually, there was someone who wanted to adopt this furball last night. She gave me 300,000 eris as a gift for transferring ownership.”

“Ah!?”

Hearing my carefree words, Yunyun shouted sharply in surprise.

Yunyun got up and hugged Chomsuke tightly as if to protect it.

“You mean you want to sell this kid!? This kid that you have been taking care of so far!? Hey, this kid is...!”

“It is just an ordinary cat. That’s right, just an ordinary cat. There’s nothing strange about it.”

For some reasons, Yunyun was suspicious of Chomsuke's true identity. She held her tongue.

"This is probably for the best. I'm going on a journey to become an adventurer. If I bring this kid along, it will be targeted by monsters since it is so tiny."

"Ugh... Bu- But..."

Yunyun hugged Chomsuke and looked at me with pleading eyes.

I said to Yunyun.

"Think about it. If this kid is left at home, Chomsuke will be alone with Komekko most of the time. Uh... Although it is hard to say... I cannot guarantee my sister won't eat it..."

"You should educate her properly. Aren't you the elder sister!? Besides Chomsuke, now I'm getting worried about Komekko's future as well!"

Although Yunyun seemed to agree with me tentatively, she continued to hug Chomsuke.

"If it is someone who can take care of Chomsuke, it might be better to give it to her..."

At this moment.

"Not Chomsuke. It is Lady Wolbach."

Without us knowing, Anis stood before the open door.

Anis was wearing a hood typical of wizards. From between her red hair, her yellow eyes stared at Yunyun suspiciously.

I got up from my disgraceful position on the floor.

"Oh, you're here. Yunyun, this is person who will take over Chomsuke."

".....Not Chomsuke, it's Lady Wolbach. And it is not taking over... Who is this person whom my master seems to like?"

Being stared down by Anis, Yunyun guardedly hugged Chomsuke tightly.

Seeing this, Anis stiffened her smile.

“I’m the person who took in this kid together with Megumin. Why do you want this kid? And what is this about a master?”

“.....I’m grateful to you for taking in Lady Wolbach, but it is better for you not to inquire further. Then, Lady Wolbach, let’s go.”

Anis didn’t seem guarded towards me, but she seemed particularly sarcastic towards Yunyun.

Yunyun was never particularly assertive. She shuddered as she seemed to be overwhelmed by Anis.

“Here, please hand it over to me.”

Although Anis was polite, she had an air that tolerated no refusal. Yunyun fearfully handed Chomsuke over.

Anis took Chomsuke and smiled.

“Thank you. I will protect Lady Wolbach, please don’t worry.....Ah!? Lady Wolbach? It hurts, La- Lady Wolbach, please stop playing!”

Chomsuke suddenly struggled and escaped from Anis’ hands.

Anis was hurt more by the rejection than by the pain of being scratched.

Upon reaching the floor, Chomsuke returned to Yunyun’s side.

“Uh, what should we do? It looks like it really hates her. But to return the money...”

“Return the money, Megumin! If you need money, just work! If this kid finds her so repulsive...”

Yunyun said to me as I struggled with the monetary issue. At this time—

“...So what if it finds me repulsive? Lady Wolbach has not recovered

her memories, so she is naturally cautious of me. If she is with me, she will recover her memories soon. Come, please come here...”

Anis said as she bended over to catch Chomsuke.

This action caused her hood to slide off, revealing her head.

—A pair of horns protruded from her red hair.

PART 4

The surrounding mood changed immediately.

“Ah— Ah...”

Her polite attitude was gone.

“What should I do... Are the two of you tight-lipped?”

Hearing her, Yunyun and I hurriedly nodded.

—Demon.

This was a species that feed on human emotions. They ranged from cannon fodders like gremlins to succubi, who were very popular among males.

There were many different types of demons from low to high levels. Greater demons were particularly fierce and powerful.

Anis was probably a greater demon. It would be difficult to defeat her without many wizards using advanced magic.

Of course, neither of us could use advanced magic.

Yunyun could only use intermediate magic.

And my Explosion magic could not be used within such a short range. More importantly, I would be killed before I could finish the long incantation to cast Explosion magic.

“Wh- Why is there a greater demon here...?”

Yunyun mumbled to herself. Anis smiled as she readjusted her hood.

“I said this before. It is best not to inquire further, right? Come, hand Lady Wolbach to me. I will spare both of you, if you keep my identity a secret.”

Yunyun was paralyzed on the spot. I picked up Chomsuke, who stuck to Yunyun and meowed casually regardless of the situation.

Even demons were involved now. If I continued to keep this kid, I would probably be dragged into further trouble in the future.

Therefore, this should be fine.

At least, it would be better than travelling with me. Or staying at home with Komekko.

For Chomsuke, this was probably the best option.

“.....Well? Hand it over quickly.”

But I couldn't move my hand.

I didn't want to hand over this troublesome furball.

Seeing my hesitation, Anis became impatient and reached out her hand...

“Fire Ball—!”

Suddenly.

Still sitting at the doorway, Yunyun suddenly unleashed a fire ball at full power.

If the fire ball exploded in this close distance, we would definitely be scorched.

However, that fire ball was probably a warning as it flew past Anis' head and exploded in the clear morning sky.

“.....What is the meaning of this? I already said I will spare you... Are you seeking death? Since both of you took care of Lady Wolbach, I didn't want to harm you...”

Anis narrowed her beast-like yellow eyes, staring suspiciously at

Yunyun, who remained sitting in the doorway.

Despite being frightened, Yunyun stood up and placed her hand on the dagger at her waist, preparing for a battle.

Oh dear. Given our current power, we would probably be killed by this demon instantly.

Anis gave an ultimatum to me, who was secretly anxious.

“I will say it one last time. Hand Lady Wolbach over to me. Or else I will immediately tear both of you apart.”

Her penetrating glare was overwhelming.

Next to me, Yunyun still drew her dagger.

When this kid wanted to protect someone, she could become so reckless.

She was like this when I was being chased by the evil god’s minions.

Now, she was full of enthusiasm in order to protect the furball in my arms.

She was just a brat who even lacked the initiative to approach others for conversation, yet at this time...

“You want this furball, right? Then catch it, please be careful not to let Lady Fulbach fall on the ground.”

“She’s not furball! Also not Lady Fulbach! She is... Ah.”

I threw Chomsuke towards the socially stiff Anis.

Chomsuke went along the angle of projection, passed by Anis, and flew out of the doorway...!

“Lady Wolbach!!”

At the last moment, Anis managed to catch it as she was sliding along the ground with all her might.

Her drastic actions caused her hood to fall off again.

Panting heavily, Anis stood up and glared in my direction.

“You- You- You...! Dare...”

As she was about to reprimand me...

A beam of light flashed past her cheek just as she was standing up.

The beam of light easily penetrated into my house from outside, creating a hole in the wall.

“My- My wall! I just repaired it after it was damaged by the evil god’s minions!”

As I cried out, Anis slowly turned to look behind. Blood seeped from the wound on her face.

“I was wondering what had happened to cause the explosion... A demon in Home of the Crimson Magic. What is your business here?”

“You are holding on to Megumin’s cat, right? What are you doing, cat thief?”

Several Crimson Magic Clansmen appeared.

Buzucoily the NEET was also among them.

Anis narrowed her yellow eyes as if she was a beast about to attack a prey.

“.....Who used that magic on me just now?”

Anis asked softly with barely contained anger.

But the Crimson Magic Clansmen, who rushed over here, did not even care.

.....Ah, is it?

They must be the so-called Anti-Demon King Army Guerilla Unit.

This self-defense force was composed of jobless villagers who came together to patrol the region.

Then Buzucoily, who was probably attacked with magic earlier, said.

“I’m the one who used the magic earlier. So what? ...By the way, are you the Explosion Maniac who has been disturbing the village? Your characteristics were just as Megumin described. A voluptuous female demon with horns, right?”

“Eh?”

Hearing this, Anis lost her impetus and said in confusion.

.....The characteristics I had described?

Ah, I did say something like this.

Back then, I said it off-handedly to cover up my usage of Explosion magic.

“And Megumin said she escaped after a fierce battle... I see. You must have come here to seek vengeance on Megumin.”

“...Aha! You took Megumin’s cat to use it as a hostage! For a demon, you are really negligent and half-hearted...”

“Huh?”

Confronted by these sudden accusations, Anis was at a loss.

Anis froze in her position to stand up with Chomsuke in her arms.

She was doubtlessly a greater demon.

It was said that the higher level a demon was, the more intelligent it would be.

Therefore, to defeat Anis, many wizards with advanced magic were necessary.

“I say, you are really brave to repeatedly unleash magic in the middle of the night. Because of you, we were forced to go on patrols late at night.”

“Eh... Ah?”

Anis looked around in confusion at this opportunistic racketeering. Unwittingly, she was surrounded by many newly arrived Crimson

Magic Clansmen.

Correct. Normally, many powerful wizards were needed to defeat a demon like Anis.

.....But.

“Hey, I’m talking to you. What did you think this place is?”

“I don’t know your identity, but you are really brave... Even the leaders of the demon king’s army won’t dare to come to this village alone... Hey, release Megumin’s cat now.”

Slightly trembling, Anis let go of Chomsuke as if she still did not comprehend the situation.

She was probably at a loss about what to do, but she understood that if she did not let go of her master, her life would be in danger.

After being freed, Chomsuke swaggered over to me and lay down at my feet.

Anis reached out to Chomsuke.

“Uh, uh.....”

“This is Home of the Crimson Magic where even the demon king’s army dare not come near.”

Anis’ mumblings were interrupted.

Yes, this was where Crimson Magic Clansmen gathered, where advanced magic was common – Home of the Crimson Magic.

“A demon who comes here casually must be either very confident or very stupid...”

Hearing this, Anis broke out in cold sweat and glanced around.

She remained in her half-bending pose.

Her expression froze and her eyes became teary as Anis saw the Crimson Magic Clansmen casting advanced magic simultaneously.

PART 5

—After Anis fled in tears from the chasing Crimson Magic Clansmen, we completed many tasks, including wall repair.

“Really. What was that demon about? But it is good that she left. Chomsuke is fine too.”

Yunyun said as she caressed Chomsuke who was at her feet.

Anis escaped, leaving this furball behind.

If it remained here at home, she would return to take it.

Therefore.

“.....Yunyun, I want to ask you for a favor. Can you keep Chomsuke at your home?”

“Eh!? What are you saying so suddenly!?”

I said to the surprised Yunyun.

“Well. I didn’t know that Anis is a demon, but it is good to have someone take in Chomsuke. I said it before, this furball is not suitable to tag along when I become an adventurer.”

“Bu- But! Since the demon has fled, the deal..... Ah!?”

As she was about to say something, Yunyun saw the sack full of coins that I brought out.

“The financial situation is as you can see. It appears she has forgotten about it. I will use it to pay the teleport fee.”

“To- Too much! Is this okay? I say, is this really okay!?”

Yunyun grumbled on. But the money gained from defeating monsters could be spent freely. It had always been like this.

I didn’t actually defeat Anis, but this could be considered as reward for my good karma, so I would use it gratefully.

Yunyun was still mumbling about “Is this really okay”.

“In summary, Yunyun, I intend to go on my journey tomorrow.”

“So early!? Isn’t it too rushed!? You should slow down slightly, so our classmates can send you off or something!”

Not early at all.

I already waited for more than half a year.

Truthfully, I could barely wait to rush out of the village to start my adventures immediately.

But I still needed to make some preparations and arrangements for Komekko.

“I will leave tomorrow morning. There is no need for a send-off. A Crimson Magic Clansman is a mighty and lonely existence. Besides, if it is predestined, we will meet again elsewhere.”

“What are you saying? Wait! I will gather everyone now. I won’t let you leave so abruptly!”

Yunyun said and ran off.

Yunyun, who couldn’t even approach someone to say “hello”, was actually going to gather people.

It looked like she would be fine even without me.

As I thought about this, I picked up Chomsuke who was lying at my feet.

PART 6

I did not know where Yunyun went.

Then Yunyun returned and dragged me over—

“I didn’t think Megumin would leave the village. As impulsive and argumentative as you are, can you really become an adventurer?”

“It looks like you will have a hard time finding party members!”

The ones who said these rude words were Funifura and Dodonko.

Why must these two always say things like that?

“Megumin would be fine. After all, she is the only one I never managed to win.”

Arue, the classmate with the eye patch, said.

“Eh? I- I did not lose to Arue either..... Ah!?”

Yunyun was about to say something to Arue, then cried out suddenly.

“In the last exam before both of you graduated, isn’t Yunyun’s ranking lower than mine?”

Hearing this, Yunyun lowered her head dejectedly.

Back then, Yunyun intentionally lowered her ranking so she can graduate together with me.

Well, you reaped what you sowed.

Unexpectedly, Yunyun clenched her fists as if she was unwilling to concede defeat. Meanwhile, I was busy stuffing my mouth with cake.

Funifura and Dodonko said to me helplessly.

“...I say. At this last moment, stop eating so much and chat with us. Don’t you have a bit of human emotions?”

“Megumin is still a girl after all, right? Instead of eating, you should pay more attention to how you dress up.”

They could say whatever they liked.

I didn’t even know if there would be a proper meal after starting on my journey.

Eat while you can, rest while you can. This is the fundamental knowledge of being an adventurer.....

“.....We are not asking you not to eat either. But at least do it after

we are done with our farewells.”

Yunyun said as she carried Chomsuke—

This was the biggest house in Home of the Crimson Magic, Yunyun’s home.

My send-off was currently in progress.

It seemed Yunyun only invited the classmates I was closer to in school.

Dishes and cakes were set on the table in Yunyun’s room.

“An adbendurer should eat while she can, rest while she can...”

“Swallow first before you speak!”

Yunyun grumbled. For some reasons, she seemed extraordinarily excited.

“Ah, Arue, want some more fruit juice? Funifura wants grape flavor, right? Megumin, you will choke if you don’t drink something.”

Yunyun enthusiastically served everyone drinks.

It looked like she was really excited about having friends to visit her home.

When we arrived, Yunyun’s family members were shocked.

This was probably the first time she had friends coming over.

“Hey, Yunyun, you should settle down somewhat.”

“Yes, what happened? You are so excited.”

Her sentiments had soared to the point where Funifura and Dodonko would comment on.

“So- Sorry! This is my first time hosting a party...”

“I- Is that so? Then it can’t be helped, right!?”

“It can’t be helped! So- Some time later, we can have a party during

Yunyun's birthday too!"

.....Yunyun must be trying way too hard for these two to become concerned about her.

Arue was just eating her cake so far. At this time, she said.

"By the way, where does Megumin intend to use as a base? I feel Megumin should be capable of taking on areas with powerful monsters right at the start."

"No. I intend to start with the basics and go to the rookie city Axel. After all, I'm still a rookie, so it's better to join a party with other rookies."

"Eh— So you can have a humble disposition too."

"If you show such humility more often in school, you could have made a lot more friends."

As I was considering how to deal with these sarcastic duo...

"Megumin. This is my present for you."

Suddenly, Funifura said and handed over a staff.

".....Uh. What is this? A farewell gift? I feel the mana flow is really smooth when I touch this staff. Isn't it rather expensive?"

For a wizard, a staff is an important item that could raise one's magical power.

A staff of this quality must be really expensive.

"No. It wasn't paid for. This staff was made by Funifura's father, who was a magic item artisan. By the way, the base materials were collected by these two."

After Arue explained, Funifura and Dodonko proudly added.

"We went to the forest near the village and selected a tree that was full of mana."

"Yeah. It was a simple task anyway... If you are grateful to us, bring

some handsome studs back to the village after your journey.”

Arue glanced slightly at the self-satisfied duo and said simply.

“After all, these two have not learnt advanced magic, so I went with them to the forest. Every time they met a monster, they screamed...”

“Arue!” X2

After Yunyun and I graduated, Arue also successfully learnt advanced magic and graduated.

Since Arue’s mana was just below and Yunyun’s mana and mine, I thought she would become a magic item artisan or something similar.

But she announced that she was going to be an author and stayed at home all day. I really didn’t know what she was thinking.

I hugged the staff I just received and said.

“Thank you. I will treasure it. Honestly, I didn’t think I would receive something like this from you two. What is it? Is this the so-called tsundere^[WJ]?”

“No, it’s not! I feel very uncomfortable owing you a debt!”

“The potion Megumin created was really effective. Deep down, Funifura is really grateful to Megumin.”

“Wa- Wait!”

.....Eh.

“What? Funifura’s brother was really sick back then? I thought that was just an excuse to scam some money from Yunyun for entertainment.”

“I know my personality is not good, but even I won’t do something like that!”

“Funifura may be a hardcore brocon^[WJ], but she isn’t outrageously wicked to that extent!”

“Hey!!”

As Funifura and Dodonko argued, Yunyun remained very quiet.

Or rather, she wanted to say something but couldn't say it.

“Yunyun, isn't it time for you to bring it out?”

“Yes. You made so much effort to prepare it, right?”

Then, Yunyun took out a paper bag.

And forcefully shove it over.

“For you. Megumin, you are still using the school uniform as your casual wear, right? You don't seem too particular about what you wear, so I made a wizard's robe for you. How is it...?”

The paper bag contained a robe, a cloak, and a hat.

Truthfully, this was a blessing.

My school uniform was already torn and tattered.

“Thank you. I will treasure it.”

Hearing this, Yunyun exhaled in relief.

At this time, Funifura said to Arue maliciously.

“Arue? Hey, didn't you prepare a gift?”

“Yeah. We already prepared the staff and whatever. Didn't Arue have anything?”

As usual, this duo's personalities were terrible.

Arue nodded and acknowledged. Until now, she had been concentrating on her food.

“Then, let me reveal the rare item I have hidden away.”

Arue said and took off her eye patch, which she had never taken off during her school days.

“Ah!?”

“This is the first time I see Arue without her eye patch!”

Arue ignored the loud duo and gave me the eye patch.

“This is a high quality item filled with great power. Wearing this will strengthens one’s mental fortitude and resistance against mind control, charm, and similar magic. It can also restrain one’s mana. I was born with a vast amount of mana. To keep my magical power under control, I have been wearing this since I was young.”

Arue’s past was finally revealed.

Normally, nobody had a clue what Arue was thinking of. It was unthinkable that she had something like this.

“I- Is it really okay to give Megumin something so important?”

“Yeah, aren’t you worried your power would go out of control?”

Arue answered Funifura and Dodonko with a smile.

“No problem. I don’t need to wear this anymore. Although I learnt magic as my family wishes, my dream is to become an author. I want to be an author who writes things that will make people happy. Since Megumin is becoming an adventurer, please tell me about what your adventures sometime. I want to write about the adventures of Megumin’s little party.”

She said something so cool.

The other three persons started to be uncomfortable.

“Ah, what should we do? We only gave a staff.”

“Our staff, uh, was made from stretch, so we can consider it as being full of good will...!”

“Wh- What should I do? I bought my gift directly from a shop!”

I said to the three mumbling persons—

“They are fine as they are. I will treasure all of them. Thank you all.”

I smiled and said.

“Ye- Yeah! The most important thing is good will!”

“Right! ...Ah, Arue, if Megumin wears the eye patch, won't her mana be sealed? Won't that reduce her magical power?”

“Ah... If she wants to use her full power, she can just take off the eye patch...”

As they chatted, I was preparing to wear the eye patch...

At this time, Arue took out a beautifully wrapped box and said without looking me in the eye.

That box contained a new eye patch.



“Ah, no problem. Actually, there is no such effect. When I was young, my grandfather bought me the eye patch for the look. It is worn out now, so I just bought a new one. Didn’t I say my goal is to become an author? It is normal for an author to make up stories...”

I threw the eye patch I was about to wear at Arue and snatched her new eye patch.

PART 7

After the sending off party ended, everyone left.

Yunyun said she wanted to send me home.

Was she treating me like a kid who would be lost that easily?

On the darkened road.

Yunyun said softly.

“Megumin. Will you come back to the village after meeting that elder sister in robes?”

Her voice was somewhat stuttering as if she was forcefully trying to be cheerful.

I said to Yunyun who was walking next to me.

“No. I won’t return to the village. After entering the world outside, I must become super strong along with my party. I might as well defeat the current demon king and become the next demon king. At that time, I will let Yunyun become a leader in the demon king’s army.”

“I don’t want! Why must you become a villain!? Anyway, it is impossible since you can only use Explosion magic.”

I didn’t want to hear such realistic words.

“.....I will leave the village tomorrow morning. So if you want to send me off, wake up early.”

“Why must I intentionally do such things! Hey, are you really leaving tomorrow? Komekko is so little...! If it is her, she would probably be okay...”

“That kid is more independent than me. I made arrangements with my neighbors. My parents are not always away from home as well.”

Compared to that.

“Can I pass this furball to you? I still feel it is not a good idea to bring it along on dangerous journeys.”

Chomsuke was sticking to my shoulder and reluctant to move. I tried to push it to Yunyun.

“.....After giving it such a name, you now want to give it away.....”

Yunyun caressed Chomsuke in sympathy.

“But isn’t it very close to Megumin? I feel that there are very few places more dangerous than Home of the Crimson Magic. You might as well bring it along.”

“.....Well, it can be bait or emergency ration, so it isn’t as if it is useless...”

“Don’t! Why are your thoughts always so savage and vicious!?”

As we argued on, my home came into view.

If Yunyun wouldn’t come to send me off tomorrow, we should say our farewell here.

“Yunyun will take over as chief after learning advanced magic?”

“Yes. But I won’t do it immediately after learning advanced magic. I think that would be in the distant future...”

So, that.....

Yunyun seemed troubled as she mumbled softly.

As if she lacked the courage to speak up, she made several attempts to say something and gave up midway.

What did she want to say?

.....I arrived at the door.

“Then, Yunyun. As my self-proclaimed rival, please work hard. If you take too long, I would become the demon king who rules the world.

It would be too late to say you wanted to be a leader at that time.”

“I won’t say something like that! If Megumin become the demon king, I will defeat you!”

Yunyun grumbled as usual.

As I stood at my door, I felt relieved to hear her said that.

“Then, goodbye.”

“.....Yeah, goodbye.”

I said a very normal farewell to Yunyun.

I felt Yunyun’s eyes on me as I turned my back.

I opened the closed door.

PART 8

“Welcome home, sis! Let’s eat dinner!”

Komekko ran lightly over. I would be apart from her for a while.

Would my sister cry?

What should I do if she cried and pestered me not to leave?

“Komekko, I have something to say before dinner.”

“?”

I sat up straight before her.

At the same time, Komekko also sat up straight on the floor.

I said to Komekko as she looked bewildered.

“Komekko. I will be leaving tomorrow on a journey.”

“Okay.”

.....

“Komekko, it is a journey. Sis will be away on a journey. Of course, I won’t be back for some time. You won’t be able to see your beloved sister for a long time.”

“I know! I will endure it!”

What a strong kid.

“If you feel sad, you can try a bit to make me stay. Of course, I made up my mind, so I won’t be persuaded. It would be useless to do so.”

“I understand! I won’t say useless things!”

“Komekko. Sis is happy that you are so strong, but I’m also a bit hurt.”

“Sis is so tsundere.”

“!?”

—After bathing with my sister, I invited her to sleep together.

“Sis is a willful brat.”

“Ko- Komekko!? Where did you learn such terms like ‘tsundere’ and ‘willful brat’!?”

“From our neighbor, Buzucoily.”

“That blasted NEET huh.”

I should beat him up before leaving tomorrow.

Komekko deftly made her bedding in the living room.

After sneaking under her blanket, she didn’t mention ‘willful brat’ anymore and quietly slept with me.

What was happening? I felt our roles were reversed.

As the elder sister, I wished she would be slightly willful.

In the dark room.

I held her hand tightly under the blanket. Komekko returned the grip.

“.....Komekko. If anything happened when I’m not around, tell the adults nearby immediately.”

“Yes, I know.”

My sister was very reliable, but she was still small.

I should entrust her to my neighbors tomorrow.

“Although he isn’t reliable, you can discuss matters with Buzucoily, since he is basically free every day.”

“I know. I will find him when I’m out of food!”

Did that NEET have such capabilities?

“If you are lonely, you can go to Yunyun’s house. She will happily take care of you. Or rather, she would be lonely herself, so patronize her sometime.”

“Okay. I understand.....”

Komekko’s voice was getting softer.

Her voice sounded sleepy.

“.....I will leave a note for our parents. When they return, remember to pass it to them. I told them previously that I would leave after saving enough money, so they won’t worry even if they didn’t see me.”

“Okay...”

Komekko sounded like she was about to sleep.

I hugged her little body as I listened.

I might be a siscon.

I should take this chance to stock up on some siscon energy.

.....At this time, Komekko said in the dark.

“Sis.”

“.....? What is it?”

As I hugged her, Komekko tightly hugged me back and said softly.

“Come back soon.”

.....I didn't mind being a siscon then.

I hugged Komekko until morning.

—The next morning.

I quietly got out of bed without waking Komekko who was still sound asleep.

I put on the robe given by Yunyun.

Then, I wore the eye patch given by Arue and stood before the mirror.

.....Eh, not bad. This eye patch looked quite nice.

Next, I put on the hat and picked up my staff.

I was charmed by my own image in the mirror.

“Sis, what are you playing?”

I made a pose in front of the mirror. Komekko suddenly showed up and copied it.

After breakfast, I carefully checked my luggage.

It didn't seem like there was anything missing.

Or rather, there was barely anything for me to bring along to begin with.

As I was about to leave the house.

“Sis, you forgot something!”



I checked thoroughly, yet Komekko ran after me with something.

“What is it?”

“Packed meal!”

Komekko pushed the big brick-sized item into my hands.

..... It looked like she prepared a packed meal for me.

There were a lot of rice balls inside.

Komekko did something like this before I left. It made me hesitate if I should cancel the trip and live happily with Komekko.

“Also, I will give you this, so that willful brat Sis won’t be lonely.”

Komekko said rudely as she handed me the picture book she frequently let me read to her before bed.

This should be her treasure.

I smiled bitterly as I put the picture book into my luggage.

Komekko saw this and smiled in satisfaction.

“Sis, work hard! You must become the strongest!”

“.....I know. I promise you I will become the most powerful wizard one day!”

I acted cool in front of my sister and flipped the cloak Yunyun gave me.

This was not bad.

Yunyun really gave me something good.

Komekko held up her small fists.

“You must defeat the demon king!”

“De- Demon king? I said something like that before, but...”

“Must defeat him!”

“.....I will work hard at it.”

I replied forcefully. Komekko smiled in satisfaction.

PART 9

Outside, the sunlight was so glaring that it hurt the eyes.

It was a good weather for travel.

Before leaving, there was somewhere I had to go.

“Good morning. Is Buzucoily around?”

Oh, Megumin. Welcome. My son is still sleeping.”

I came to my neighbor’s shoe shop and asked the shop owner to help my sister in times of need.

“No problem. Your parents asked me to take care of both you and Komekko before! Leave it to me. Megumin, you too. If there is any problem, just say so.”

I felt relieved after hearing this.

“There is something troubling me.”

“Oh? What is it?”

I frowned and said gloomily.

“Actually, Buzucoily has been teaching my sister some bad words. I hope he won’t do that anymore...”

“Ba- Bad words!? What was it...”

“As a girl, it is hard to say it out.”

“That bastard!”

The shop owner shouted Buzucoily’s name as he rushed upstairs.

This was good.

After this lesson, he wouldn’t teach Komekko strange things for a while.

I left the shoe shop and carried my luggage to the teleport shop.

A single trip ticket to the City of Water Alcanretia cost 300,000 eris.

That was almost all the money I had.

If I didn't find some work there...

No, I could become an adventurer immediately.

Even though I could use magic only once per day, I wouldn't lose to anyone as long as I didn't mess up its use.

It would be good if I could meet a party that could make use of me effectively...

As I thought about this, I arrived at the teleport shop.

"You're so slow. You really put on airs to let everyone wait for you early in the morning."

Someone called me from behind as I was about to enter the shop.

I turned around and saw my classmates with Funifura, Dodonko, and Arue in the lead.

They seemed to be here to send me off.

".....Everyone is so free."

"Will it hurt for you to be thankful at the final moment!?"

Funifura blushed and complained.

At this moment, I noticed that someone was missing.

Seeing me looking around, Funifura said lazily.

"Yunyun won't be coming. She said she had something important to discuss with her family."

"I- I didn't say anything!?"

Hearing this, Funifura and Dodonko smiled viciously.

.....Ugh. If I wasn't leaving today, I would definitely make them cry.

As I was grinding my teeth, Arue pointed at my eye patch and said.

“It suits you.”

“I will treasure it.”

I said my farewells to my weird friends.

“The teleport to Alcanretia will start shortly. Each trip is limited to four people. The next trip will be in the afternoon. If you wish to teleport, please hurry.”

Hearing the shop owner’s announcement, I waved my hand and turned my back on everyone.

In the end, I didn’t get to see Yunyun.

She said before that she wouldn’t be sending me off. Since she didn’t have any friends, she would be very lonely. If she came, she might want to leave with me, so it was better this way.

There was a certain reluctance to leave...

I handed the sack of silver coins to the shop owner and stood on the teleport platform along with other customers.

Using a magic platform could reduce teleport accidents and mana consumption.

The destination was the City of Water and Hot Springs, Alcanretia.

It was impossible not to be nervous on my first trip outside the village.

But anxiety was accompanied by a similar expectation.

As I was now, I would not lose.

I promised Komekko.

A promise to become the strongest wizard.

“Okay, let’s get going. Please relax and not resist the magic.”

I relaxed my body and closed my eyes as I listened to the shop owner.

And then, I thought of my classmates who came to send me off.

My body was naturally filled with strength.

My mind imagined the unknown world.

“Then, have a good trip. Teleport!”

I gave myself in to the teleport magic—

INTERLUDE: SCENE 2

Lady Aqua, I Would Not Admit Defeat!

I’m hungry.

I plotted to get a treat from the handsome youth who wielded the magic sword, but he managed to escape.

I cried and begged him not to leave, but he vanished in the morning, leaving a letter behind.

The letter mentioned strange things like “using the power granted by the goddess to save the world”. I wished he would save me from poverty before saving the world.

I thought he would become a devout Axis Cultist...

Since he was already gone, it couldn’t be helped.

I had to think of a way to get a meal...

What about putting a donation box near the school?

Naïve children may put their pocket money into the box.

.....But I felt that I would lose something important if I did that.

Or perhaps make some money using my beauty?

.....No, no, no. Since I’m famous as the beautiful priestess of the Axis Cult, doing this would bring disrepute on the cult itself.

If it carried on like this, I could only eat Tokoroten^[M] Slime every meal daily.

No matter how much I liked it, I would still get sick...

Then there was only that move—

“—It’s Cecily! Cecily is here! The precept-breaking priestess from the Axis Cult is here again!”

“Hey, Cecily! Why are you here!? There aren’t any more young Eris Cultists that you love so much here. Because you always make trouble here, those Eris Cultists who brought their children have left for other cities! Because of you, the Eris Cultists in this city are rapidly reducing! If you still insist on doing something stupid, then let me be your opponent!”

Two men stood before the Eris Church, blocking my way and saying such rude things.

“Don’t say it like I am responsible for your loss of believers! I merely told those poor ignorant kids how great my cult is! Is there a law that forbids preaching to the pagans?”

“You and your cult’s doctrines are having a bad influence on the kids! ‘Axis Cultists are good people, so when things go wrong, it’s not your fault. It’s the world’s fault!’ And ‘Instead of stiffly suppressing yourself, relax and live without care. Who knows what tomorrow may bring? Instead of expecting the void of tomorrow, enjoy your life today!’ The children who went over to play at your side always return with weird perspectives! I will say this bluntly, your very existence is trouble! Don’t come near those kids again!”

As the famous beautiful elder sister who loved kids, I was being scolded by Eris Cultists.

“.....It’s true I come here frequently, but to think that was how you thought of me... Although we have different religions, I believed that as fellow priests, we could come to understand each other one day...”

Being assaulted by harsh words, I lowered my head, clenched my fists, and spoke in a trembling voice.

“.....Ce- Cecily? Hey, don't play this trick. I suddenly have a sense of sinfulness... Are you joking? You are just pretending to be hurt... right...?”

“No, no. We were too harsh! It was too much to say you are trouble and ask you not to get close to the children. We don't mean it like that. Because of your usual behavior, we wanted to ask you to...”

I lowered my head and walked pass the two pale-faced people who were hurriedly explaining themselves. For some reasons, there was a sack full of bread at the entrance of the Eris Church. I grabbed the sack.

“Eh? Ce- Cecily? What are you doing...”

“.....Hey, hey, that is...!”

I raised my head angrily.

“For bullying the cute and beautiful priestess, Eris Cultists can all go to hell!”

I took the sack of bread and ran.

“Hey, wait! Don't leave! Those bread were donated by everyone to feed the poor.....!”

I glared at the man who intended to pursue me.

“First the handsome youth with the magic sword escaped, then I was bullied by you people. Am I not the poor!? Why be so gentle to me now? Don't make me stay! Just ignore me! Don't come over!”

I ditched my two pursuers.

I offered a prayer to Lady Aqua, who must be watching over me right now.

—Lady Aqua, I would not give in to defeat!

“Stop messing around! Who wants to keep you! The important thing is the bread! Leave the bread behind!”

Chapter 3

TROUBLESOME CULT IN THE CITY OF WATER



PART 1

I wore the equipment given by my friends.

I promised my sister to become the strongest wizard.

I felt I would not lose to anyone.

.....I used to have such feelings.

“—I didn’t think the adventurer’s guild had level limits...”

I used both hands to hold the staff supporting my body weight and sighed deeply.

—Alcanretia, the City of Water and Hot Springs.

The monsters near this city were rather powerful.

There were weak monsters like goblins and kobolds, but they usually came in a set with monsters like the Rookie Killers.

Thus, the adventurer’s guild in this city forbade low level adventurers from taking on quests.

I had the confidence that I could kill any powerful foe with my Explosion magic, but if it wouldn’t help if I was not allowed take on quests.

My destination was Axel City.

I needed money to pay for the carriage fee to Axel...

Upon arrival, I immediately went to the adventurer’s guild, but this was the result.

“What should I do... I don’t know how much the carriage fee would cost, but the money I currently have is probably not enough. There is no doubt about this...”

I thought so as I looked at my money pouch on the bench in the garden. I sighed.

At this time, there was a shout of desperation.

“—Axis Cult! Please join the Axis Cult!”

“Don’t you want to worship Lady Aqua together? Revere her together? Serve her together? I guarantee your life would be

dramatically changed in many ways!”

Axis Cult.

According to hearsay, it was a religious sect that worshipped the goddess of water. Its members were very weird and people only knew of it by name.

Axis Cultists were shouting to persuade people to join.

“After hearing various anecdotes of Lady Aqua, you will be in love with Lady Aqua!”

“If you join the Axis Cult, you will become a master acrobat or possess unique traits such as being loved by the undead!”

.....Master acrobat aside, being loved by the undead was a problem in itself.

The owners of those voices were two female cultists.

Although they were shouting with all their might, the results were not good.

“Those people seem to be having a hard time...”

I looked away from the Axis Cultists towards the streets of Alcanretia.

Truly, this region favored veteran adventurers. The adventurers I had seen in this city were all equipped with high quality items. They looked really strong.

They didn’t look like they would accept a rookie like me as a companion.

“Ah, you there who look like you don’t have any friends! Look at your unlucky face, if you join Axis Cult, you will be lucky really soon!”

“Un- Unlucky face... Uh, if I join, can I really make some friends... No, so- sorry. I’m looking for someone. Please leave membership issues for later!”

If it was like this, I would have to do low pay jobs to earn money...

“.....!?”

I stood up roughly and turned around quickly. I seemed to have heard a familiar voice.

But the person whom I always argued with was not there. There were only the Axis Cultists who continued to proselytize.

Was I relying on her mentally?

I felt slightly embarrassed as my face reddened.

.....No- Not good.

I got no time to care about others. I must find a job first.

I couldn't work properly in the Home of the Crimson Magic, but that was because the Home of the Crimson Magic was too special.

Because most jobs needed advanced magic as a prerequisite, I failed at them. However, I could manage work that did not require magic, such as harvesting vegetables.

And if Funifura didn't come to make trouble, I could probably do the job at the restaurant as well.

There should be very few job that the genius of Crimson Magic Clan could not handle.

After encouraging myself, I energetically left to find a job—

PART 2

“You're fired!”

“Pleas- Please wait, shop owner! Firing is too much. There is a reason for this!”

“Fine. I will listen to your reason.”

I begged the shop owner in the employee's rest room.

Since coming to Alcanretia, this shop was my 10 th part-time job's

location.

I couldn't afford to be fired again.

"The truth is because the customer thought I was a kid who sneaked into the restaurant and said, 'Little girl, you shouldn't be here. Where did your mommy go?' He tried to remove me from the shop."

"I see. I see."

The shop owner said, nodding his head.

...It looked like this wasn't enough!

"Then, I said to the customer. 'Hey, who are you calling a little girl? Why don't you tell me what you were looking at to judge if I am a little girl?' The customer replied unreasonably, 'Height and breast size.' So I used the hot food in my hands—"

"Fired."

"Shop owner!"

—A week had passed since I arrived in this city.

After changing a few shops, I still couldn't settle down to work properly.

Was I someone who couldn't fit into society?

I was supposed to be a genius.

"No- Not over yet... The restaurants were all done, but there should be other jobs...! Right, I was just unlucky so far...!"

I mumbled to encourage myself as I walked wobbly along the road.

Forget about the carriage fee. I didn't have enough money for food.

This was the second day I went without food.

My money was totally spent. I lived in the stable of the hotel.

...This was different from what I imagined the life of an adventurer would be.

Even so, I failed at all the jobs in the restaurants.

Was there some other job I could do...?

“.....You could find food daily. I don’t know how you do it. Who has been feeding you?”

I picked up Chomsuke who was at my feet, and sat by the roadside.

I didn’t know who was feeding it, but it seemed this furball was not starving.

Could someone give me some food? Something similar to what Chomsuke was having would be fine.

As my thoughts swayed towards a dangerously inhuman direction.

Suddenly, a sharp scream echoed in my ears as I was desperately hungry...

“—Ugh! Aren’t you ashamed to do such things to a gentle girl!?”

“Thi- This fellow...!”

“To say such shameless things! You better...!”

I rushed over after hearing the scream. There was a beautiful elder sister being caught by two young men.

This... This is!

I rushed over to intervene and flipped my cloak.

“Cease and desist!”

“!?” X3

The three people were stopped in their tracks by my sudden intrusion.

The elder sister recovered from the shock first.

“Please save me! These people said, ‘Are you seducing us with your cute face? For you to walk around in the streets with your coarse body, you cannot complain even if something happened to you,

right?' They want to take me away forcefully!"

"W- We didn't say that!" X2

The men objected, but if I had to choose who to believe in this situation...!

"My name is Megumin! The top wizard in Crimson Magic Clan, one who uses Explosion magic! Hmph! Since I'm here, I will not ignore this!"

"Hey, you are of Crimson Magic Clan!? Wa- Wait, you made a mistake! We are the victims!"

"Ca- Calm down! Let's talk this over!"

The men explained hurriedly.

"What a pity. You could have tricked the stupid people, but in my crimson eyes, that kind of excuse will not help you!"

"No, you need to have your crimson eyes checked!"

"Yeah, we are the Eris Cultists in this city... Ah!? This is bad!"

While we were talking, the elder sister made her escape.

.....Eris Cultists?

"Hey, how are you going to compensate this! That woman was an Axis Cultist! She drew graffiti on the statue of Lady Eris in our church!"

Wha- What should I do?

"Before that, she took all the bread that our cult prepared to feed the poor!"

I remembered this city was the main base of Axis Cult.

I heard that Axis Cult had a lot of weirdos, but I didn't think they would be so carefree and unrestrained...

"That. Uh, I'm really sorry... I- I just arrived in this city recently..."

The two Eris Cultists intended to approach me as I was bewildered...

—At this moment.

“Policeman! These are the people!”

I heard a voice suddenly. I turned around and saw the Axis Cult’s elder sister who fled earlier.

And...

“Ah!? I was suspicious since this was reported by an Axis Cultist, but Eris Cultists are real- really seducing an under-aged girl...!?”

Even brought along a male policeman.

“Wait!? I don’t know what that Axis Cultist said, but we didn’t—!”

“Right! We just wanted to catch the Axis Cultist who vandalized our church...!”

Hearing this, the elder sister from Axis Cult whispered into the policeman’s ears.

“Did you hear that? Other than the little girl, they want to take and do things to me as well.”

“Hey, you two Eris Cultists! Come with me!”

“Eh!?” X2

As the policeman approached the men, the elder sister came over to me.

“No problem! You must be scared. Now is our chance!”

“Eh! No, those Eris Cultists are...!?”

I was totally confused by the sudden development. The elder sister simply grabbed my hand.

“Ah!? The Axis Cultist and the little girl, please wait! I need to get the details from you...!”

The policeman said to the elder sister as she prepared to run away with me.

“Run! Escape now!”

“I- I don’t need to escape...!”

I glanced at the shouting policeman behind as the elder sister ran and pulled me along.

“—Are you okay? Not hurt? ...Phew. It seemed I managed to make it in time. So dangerous.”

“What are you saying? Why did it seem like I’m the one being rescued! Besides, I didn’t do anything. There is no need for me to run away!”

After I was forcefully dragged along by the elder sister.

For some reasons, we were hiding in a small alley.

“What are you saying? If I left you behind, you would definitely suffer at the hands of those evil Eris Cultists. After all, you are such a cute Lolita! Since I rescued you, you should thank me to avoid retribution. Ah, by the way, if you want to thank me, you can sign on this cult entry form...”

I grabbed hold of her hand as she spoke and attempted to retrieve some papers.

“No. Those people didn’t seem like bad guys!? And I won’t join Axis Cult! And why must I thank you...”

As I began to retort, my stomach growled.

.....It had been two days since I last ate. I couldn’t be bothered with this elder sister.

“You must be hungry. Then... Come with me. I won’t mistreat you!”

There was no need to mind such matters now...

“I’m Cecily, a priestess of Axis Cult. Don’t be modest, just call me Sis Cecily. Let’s get some delicious food and we can chat!”

.....I couldn't resist the temptation set by Cecily as she smiled suspiciously.

PART 3

"Lo- Lolita...!?"

"—It's Lolita. Our cult finally has a Lolita!"

"Call me Lolita again and I will take offense seriously! I'll show you the true power of Crimson Magic Clan!"

Inside the cathedral, which served as the headquarters of Axis Cult.

After I was brought here, everyone just labeled me as a Lolita.

"Okay, okay, Miss Megumin. The guys in our cult were banned from approaching the kids in the city. Please understand their difficulties too."

"What crimes did they commit to be banned from approaching kids?"

I stared at the cultists speechlessly. Upon Cecily's orders, several cultists enthusiastically brought some dishes over.

"Come, please eat."

".....After I ate this, you are not going to say, 'From this moment on, you are an Axis Cultist', right?"

"Of- Of course not. I swear to Lady Aqua that I won't say such petty words."

She obviously intended to say that.

I remained vigilant of my surroundings and ate. Then, a white-haired uncle came forth with a female secretary.

A smile was on his face, and he looked very amiable.

That man has an air of being different from the others.

"Oh, oh. What a cute guest. Welcome to our cult! I'm the arch priest

responsible for this cult, Zesta.”

This man who called himself Zesta said and smiled at me.

“Arch priest... That is quite impressive. I heard not many people can become priests, much less the advanced job of arch priest...”

It looked like I was right that he was different from the others.

“No, no, no. I think that Crimson Magic Clan is truly impressive to be born with the qualifications to become arch wizard.”

Zesta said and smiled.

“By the way, miss. I heard you couldn’t find a job and is having some difficulties. If you are willing, you may stay in a room of the church until you can find a job.”

He made such a kind gesture, truly fitting for a priest.

This would be a great help.

“Thank you. I’m embarrassed to do this, but my situation is pretty grave, so I will take you up on your offer... If there is anything I can help, please let me know.”

“You just said ‘anything you can help’, right?”

Zesta heard what I said and suddenly appeared very serious.

Oops. I spoke too soon.

Was he going to ask me to join his cult?

“Uh, an- anything I can help with. It’s a social obligation...”

“What should you do... Call me elder brother... No, daddy... No, no. At this moment, it should be underwear first... No. Use me as a chair...”

“Sorry, I don’t understand what you are saying.”

Zesta kept mumbling some strange words. I felt speechless.

“Ah, ah. Great goddess Lady Aqua! Please guide me from losing my

way!”

“I apologize. May I know what this pervert is about?”

“He’s Lord Zesta, not a pervert. He is set to become the next high priest, the highest ranking person in Axis Cult.”

The woman next to Zesta said as she looked at him hugging his head and trying to decide what to ask.

“This uncle is the next high priest? Is this cult really going to be okay?”

“It’s Lord Zesta, not uncle. Although he looked like this now, he can be serious when he needs to be... Uh, the cult will be okay, probably...”

Just as I was arguing with the woman.

“Lord Zesta. Sorry to interrupt your self-indulgence... But this is the report for our weekly recruitment. As expected, due to sabotages by the evil Eris Cultists, the results are not desirable...”

A cultist filed a report to Zesta, who was still deeply troubled.

“Ugh... This is truly troubling. If this continues, I’ll be too ashamed to meet Lady Aqua. It can’t be helped. I must make some trouble for that beautiful priestess in Eris Church today as well. I can release some stress and hinder them as well...”

“No, no, no. Wait a moment. You people do such things all the time? So earlier, when we were being chased by Eris Cultists...”

I grumbled unintentionally, glancing at Cecily who brought me here. She looked away to the sky as if nothing happened.

These people weren’t bad by nature, right?

Although they were not bad people, something was obviously weird with them.

“Why don’t you change your recruitment method? Pretend to be Eris Cultists and proselytize, then let them sign on Axis Cult recruitment form instead...”

“Wait. In that case, people will just run away immediately. Why not...”

The Axis Cultists began to discuss some unethical things.

After finishing my long-awaited meal, I sighed in satisfaction. I looked at them and interrupted.

“.....You people are looking for an effective way to proselytize, right?”

“Do you wish to use the great intelligence of the Crimson Magic Clan?”

Hearing this, Zesta and the other cultists looked at each other.

PART 4

The next day morning.

“Is this really okay, Miss Megumin? It would help us a lot, but...”

“This is thanks for giving me food and a place to stay. It is much better than some other weird request...”

I was suffering from mental fatigue, but I still answered Zesta.

Last night was really terrible.

I bathed with that elder sister Cecily. She did various things to me in the bath, after which she came to my bed...

I felt she wasn't a bad person, but she may have some weird kinks.

I shook my head to clear away the bad memories of last night. I hid in a small alley with Zesta and observed the situation.

—I made several suggestions on recruitment methods as a repayment for the food and shelter.

“Remember it? When a kind-looking person passes by, I will purposely scatter the apples in this shopping bag.”

Zesta listened and nodded.

“Then, as I hurriedly pick the apples up, the kind person will help me. As thanks, I will invite him to a café nearby. At this point, Mr. Zesta and the other cultists will pretend to be passing by and meet us as we chat idly. As my friends, you all will sit around the table and... persuade him to join.”

“This is great! Marvelous! This looks like it has a high success rate!”

I put my finger to my mouth and “Shhh!” to silence the excited Zesta.

“Look. A decent target is here so soon.”

A kind-looking elder sister walked towards the alley where I was observing.

Good. Now to use this shopping bag and scatter its contents before her...!

At this moment.

Zesta grabbed my shopping bag and rushed towards the elder sister.

Then, he vigorously scattered the apples from the bag.

“Wait—!”

As I was momentarily shocked, Zesta was enthusiastically dropping the apples before me.

The kind-looking elder sister looked embarrassed, but still helped with the apples.

“Ah, so sorry, Miss! I must thank you properly! Conveniently, there is a nice café nearby!”

Zesta didn't even look at the scattered apples as he panted heavily and thanked the elder sister.

The elder sister seemed to be his type.

“No, no need for thanks... Compared to that, the apples are...”

“The apples are fine as they are. Let’s go to the café! Come, let’s go!”

“Ah, no need, no need! No need for thanks! Since there isn’t any problem now, I’ll be leaving!”

The elder sister seemed afraid of the pestering Zesta and fled.

Zesta held on to the shopping bag and watched her leave. He said dejectedly.

“...Just one step short.”

“You better go back.”

—We changed a location and started our next battle.

“Next, we will form teams to prevent the weird situation earlier from happening again... But for our next battle plan, Mr. Zesta’s pathetic uncle look isn’t charming enough. What should we do...”

“Miss Megumin. No matter how strong my spirit is, I can still get hurt.”

I ignored his protests and hid in the small alley.

“So be it. Next, we will target self-righteous males. Firstly, I will cry out pitifully to attract his attention. Then, Mr. Zesta will approach me threateningly. Then, let the self-righteous guy save me. After that, it will be the same plot of thanking him...”

“I see. I understand the plan... By the way, for the part about approaching Miss Megumin, I can get as close as I like?”

“If you touch one finger, I will report to the police... Oh, speak of the devil!”

The targeted male passed by.

He looked decent and gave off a sense of valor.

“Not bad. That guy looks ideal! Then, I’ll get started!”

I rushed out of the alley and shouted to attract his attention.

“Sav- Save me! Somebody save me!”

The surrounding people were attracted by my anguished cries.

Of course, this included the self-righteous guy.

“That dangerous-looking uncle wants to forcefully take... me...?”

We arranged for Zesta to follow me out of the alley and approach me threateningly.

But he hid in the alley and looked away.

“Hey, what are you doing? I already attracted his attention! Quickly, quickly come over! Otherwise, I will become a weird kid who cries out for nothing! Everyone is looking on, they are looking on!”

As I spoke softly to Zesta, someone patted me on the shoulder.

“Hey, little girl. Can I have a moment of your time? This is my job.”

I fearfully turned around and saw the target— the self-righteous guy before me.

He was holding a black notebook.

That is...

“I’m a policeman on vacation. Can I ask what is the disturbance earlier about?”

“Thi- This, This is because... Ah!”

I looked to Zesta for help, but there was nobody there anymore.

“—Can I go back now?”

“Don’t say that! I’m sorry we left you behind! I forgot Miss Megumin came from another city. I didn’t think you would approach a policeman!”

After some entanglement with the police, I was finally released. Zesta was urging me to stay on.

“I better write down the methods on paper. It’s up to you how you

want to do it. Otherwise, I feel I will get into even bigger trouble.”

“Don- Don’t say that! Miss Megumin, how about that roadside store? It’s selling some tasty grilled meat!”

“You think I will be bribed by food... Well, I still have to eat though.”

As I ate the food treated by Zesta, Chomsuke pestered me at my feet. It probably wanted to eat too.

Zesta noticed this and bended down to reach out his hand towards Chomsuke.

“Oh, this is strange. This kid looks like an ordinary cat, but it emits an unnatural aura.”

Chomsuke wasn’t afraid of Zesta and sniffed at his finger.

I thought he was just a weird uncle, but he was an arch priest after all.

Perhaps, he may be quite powerful.

“This kid is just a normal cat. Its name is Chomsuke.”

“That’s a good name... Well, it doesn’t look very dangerous.”

Zesta ruffled Chomsuke’s head and said.

“By the way, why is Miss Megumin on a journey alone at your age? But since you are of the Crimson Magic Clan, there shouldn’t be too much danger.”

“.....Actually, I’m looking for someone. But the only clue I have is ‘the person is a beautiful elder sister with big breasts and can use Explosion magic’.”

I finished the meat and said.

I didn’t think I could easily find that person with such a vague description.

.....But Zesta gave an unexpected reply.

“A beautiful wizard with big breasts who can use Explosion magic... I

think I heard of her.”

“Eh!?”

Hearing this unexpected response, I brought my face closer to Zesta and asked.

“What is it? Details! Please tell me the details!”

“Oh, your face is so close, Miss Megumin. Want me to lick you? Just joking! It’s a joke so please don’t point your staff at me.”

Facing me as I held my staff in alert, Zesta seemed to be recalling something as he stroke his chin.

“Ah, I remember. Her location is the City of Axel. According to hearsay, in the rookie city of Axel, there is a beautiful, well-respected wizard with voluptuous body who can use even Explosion magic. She operates a magic item shop. Yes, because she is beautiful and has big tits, I remember it well. I love big tits too.”

I heard something I would have rather not heard, but secretly I was very happy.

So lucky!

Right, Axel. Exactly where I intended to go!

I couldn’t be sure it was the same person, but there shouldn’t be many wizards who could use Explosion magic.

.....This was rather promising.

“I got some useful information in addition to the food. As thanks, I will help out again.”

Zesta smiled happily as I regained my enthusiasm.

PART 5

—Roars and invectives echoed in the streets of Alcanretia.

“Over here! Those Axis Cultists stole all the toilet papers!”

I listened to the complaints from behind as I fled with Zesta.

“Mr. Zesta! Why did you steal all the tissue papers in the toilets!? I really cannot understand what you are thinking!”

“I left the recruitment forms there as a replacement for the toilet papers! That’s right. When the lost sheep descended into despair at the lack of toilet paper, the glorious recruitment forms for the Axis Cult came to the rescue! What do you think those people will do when faced with such divine offer of salvation?”

“I think they will use the forms to wipe their asses.”

“.....Wouldn’t they sign up on the forms immediately to pray to Lady Aqua for a miracle...?”

“I think not. Or rather, those forms that were left behind will only become evidence that this was done by Axis Cultists, increasing the cult’s disrepute... Ah, we are surrounded!”

Unknowingly, Zesta, who was still holding on to the toilet papers, and I were surrounded.

“You two over there! Stand still and stop resisting!”

The police came from all directions and slowly shrank the circle around us.

At this moment, Zesta strengthened his resolve and pulled my sleeve.

“Miss Megumin, now is the time to display your power. Quickly, let them witness the true power of the Crimson Magic Clan.”

This uncle was asking me to use magic to blow them away?

“Impossible. My magic cannot be restrained. The entire neighborhood will be ruined. I cannot use my magic in the city!”

“No problem! I got good stuff here!”

Zesta took out the stolen toilet paper with great confidence.

“Use this to cover your face...”

“Are you stupid? Are you really stupid!? It won’t work!”

—On the road, after being lectured at the police station.

“I think maybe your cult membership isn’t increasing because you people always do things like this.”

“I think if we recruit serious people using normal methods, the cult will be very boring.”

This guy was hopeless.

“Seriously, this is so unlucky. Let’s go back.”

“Mis- Miss Megumin, just one last time! Please do what you suggested earlier! The one about a girl falling down on the street and waiting for a passer-by to help!”

“Eh—...”

Zesta put his hands together in supplication as I looked on with reluctance.

“Please! ...Ah, coincidentally, here comes an unlucky but kind-looking kid! I feel this kid surely won’t ignore Miss Megumin! Please!”

Seriously.

We agreed that this would be the last time and hid in the alley to prepare.

“Miss Megumin, now!”

At his signal, I rushed out of the alley and fell down naturally.

“.....Ah! Ugh, ugh... To fall down on an even ground, I’m so...!”

I maintained my fallen pose and lay there without getting up.

Quickly, quickly help a weak little girl like me!

“.....Ugh, ugh. I hurt my knees. It’s so painful that I cannot move...!”

Come on, quickly.

“.....The wound will get infected and I will suffer from tetanus...”

“What are you doing?”

Hearing this familiar voice, I shivered on the floor.

“.....”

“Hey, I say, Megumin. What are you doing?”

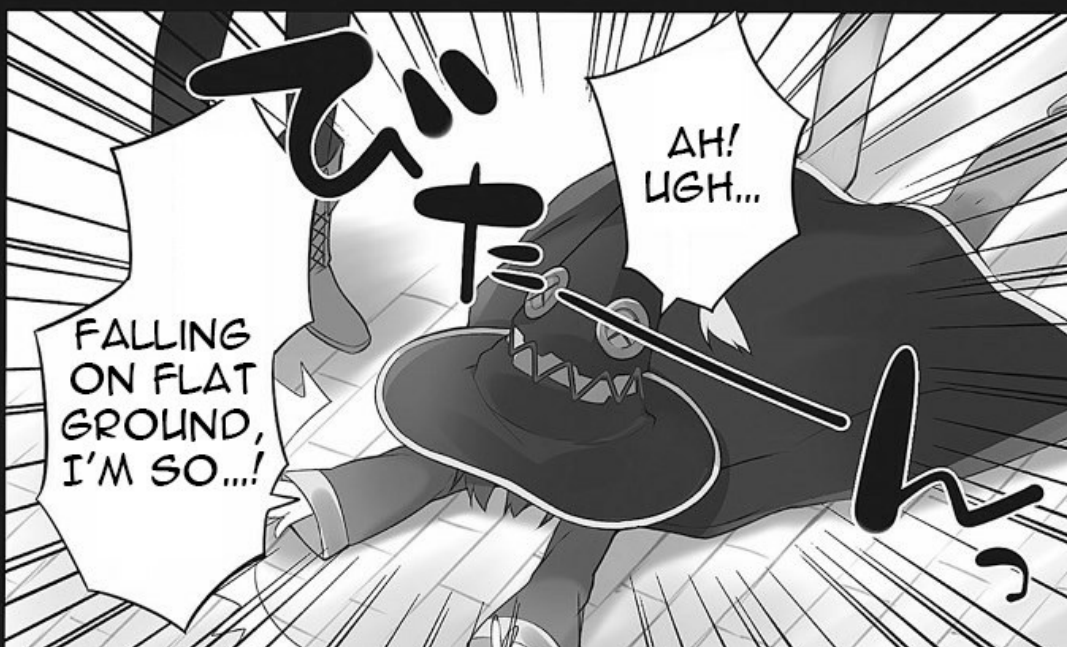
Hearing my name being called, I was certain that she was definitely who I thought she was.

I broke out in cold sweat on the floor, wondering if I should just fake it through the whole thing.

“What in the world are you doing in this strange place!?”

“Ah, Yunyun, stop! My knees really hurt. Quickly stop!”

Yunyun, who appeared out of nowhere, shook me vigorously as I lay on the floor.





PART 6

In a remote park of Alcanretia.

“Seriously. You are still my rival, so don’t do such embarrassing things. Why are you doing such silly things? What are you planning to do after falling over and letting a passer-by help you up?”

I sat up straight before Yunyun and received her lecture.

For some reasons, even Zesta was sitting straight next to me. His face was full of expectations as he sat uneasily.

.....He wished to be scolded by a pretty young girl.

“If you want to know what I was doing, you should ask this guy instead.”

“Please ask me.”

“Uh.”

Hearing our dialogues, Yunyun showed a serious look.

“...I noticed from earlier, but who are you? What is your relationship with Megumin?”

“We are companions who walked the streets... No, we are comrades. At least, we are definitely not merely ‘friends’.”

“Eh!?”

“Hey, this kid takes things seriously. Don’t say stupid things.”

“Companion... Comrade...” Yunyun mumbled with a serious expression.

I asked Yunyun something that had been bothering me.

“By the way, Yunyun. Why are you here?”

“Ah!? Well...”

Yunyun was suddenly at a loss. Her lecturing mood was gone.

.....

“Did you come because you are worried about me?”

“N- No! Training! That’s right. I’m a trip to train myself! Since Megumin is becoming an adventurer, I must train outside to catch up! Besides, the monsters near the village are too strong, I couldn’t defeat them by myself...!”

Yunyun hurriedly searched for excuses, but that last part was somewhat true.

Yunyun could only use intermediate magic.

As she was now, Yunyun couldn’t handle the monsters near the Home of the Crimson Magic by herself.

“After all, the area near the Home of the Crimson Magic was dangerous even to high level adventurers. I couldn’t find a job and was taken in by the Axis Cult, so I was helping them with recruitment.”

“That’s right. Miss Megumin taught us many excellent recruitment methods.”

“You- You are doing such things. But isn’t the Axis Cult...”

Yunyun looked at Zesta and backed off slightly in fear.

She probably heard of Axis Cult’s disrepute.

And then Zesta—

“It is so lucky to be able to admire the fearful look of a young girl...”

He said such hopeless words and sighed happily.

Could we just destroy this cult?

“I- I say, Megumin. I feel there is some issues with staying in this city... Aren’t you going to Axel?”

“Yes. But I need money to pay for the carriage fee, so I had to stay here for now and find a job.”

Zesta, who was sitting next to me, shook my shoulder.

“Miss Megumin, Miss Megumin. Who is this unlucky-looking girl?”

Please introduce her to me.”

“Unlucky-looking! I- I may not have many friends, but I still don’t want to hear this from an uncle I just met!”

“This kid who looks like she would always draw the shortest straw is a fellow villager and wizard called Yunyun. It seemed she was inspired by me to go on a training trip.”

Zesta nodded.

“It is an honor to sit straight like this before a girl, but based on my experience, the people who witnessed this should be calling the cops soon. Before the police come, let’s return to the church and chat.”

He said and smiled gently.

PART 7

—Zesta said as he opened the doors of the cathedral.

“.....What kind of play is this?”

“No- Not a play! Highest ranking official of Axis Cult, Lord Zesta. My superiors summon you. Please come with us to the police station.”

A female knight leading a lot of police welcomed us back to the church.

Two police officers grabbed Zesta from the sides, trying to take him away.

Zesta could not respond in time.

“What are you doing? You are taking him in without announcing his crimes? This is too unreasonable. This guy was with me all this while. I can be an alibi if it is needed.”

I protested and blocked the exit...!

“Lord Zesta! What crimes did you commit again!? We told you so many times that you shouldn’t overdo the new self-indulgence!”

“Is it because of the sexual harassment of the pretty priestess of Eris Cult?”

“Some time ago, he shouted in the general office, ‘Who is more suitable to be the life guard at the swimming pool than me, who serves the goddess of water!? Under-aged girls! Let me protect those under-aged girls!’ Maybe that was it?”

“Or maybe it was because of that sermon about ‘It is fine for a woman to buy men’s underwear, but a man buying women’s underwear would be severely criticized! This is gender inequality!’”

Hearing the cultists’ discussion, I moved quickly to the side to make way.

“Please go ahead.”

“Thank you for your cooperation.”

As the female knight thanked me and intended to leave the church...

“Miss Megumin. Abandoning me now is too much!? Aren’t we comrades who enjoyed the novel play of being lectured in public together!?”

“Don- Don’t say such misleading words! Please don’t call me a comrade. This is really troubling!”

After breaking free of the police, Zesta pestered me and turned towards the female knight.

“What are you doing anyway? Arrest is limited to once per day. That is our old tradition! I already received lecture by the police today.”

“When was that our old tradition!? ...Lord Zesta, please take it seriously. This time, it won’t be just a lecture like it used to be.”

“In other words, it’s a prison play?”

“Ah. Really! Talking to you drives me insane!”

The female knight shook her head in rage.

“The management of this city’s hot spring water is handled by Axis

Cult which worships the goddess of water... Since yesterday, there are repeated complaints by the hot spring hotels concerning the water quality.”

She said and glared at Zesta coldly.

“.....? Oh, there was something like that in the mountain heap of reports. As I was busy with sexual harassment... hindering the pagans and saving the lost sheep, I set that aside... But fine, let’s investigate the source of the hot springs.”

Hearing Zesta’s words.

“That won’t be necessary.”

The female knight said bluntly and flashed a piece of paper.

“Please look at this. You are accused of aiding an external enemy!”

“Raping and internal cumshot...? What is with this despicable accusation?”

“Read carefully what is written! ...Two days ago, the top management of this city received a report from our close ally, the Crimson Magic Clan. There is a very powerful diviner in Home of the Crimson Magic. You know this, right?”

A powerful diviner in Home of the Crimson Magic.

.....That should be Socketto.

“The diviner predicted, ‘Disaster will descend upon Alcanretia. When the hot springs suffer unnatural changes, take note of the manager of the spring waters. That man is a minion of the demon king.’ The current situation is exactly ‘when the hot springs suffer unnatural changes’. The current water manager is you, who are thus accused of plotting with the demons to harm this city!”

“What you are saying, young woman! Our church doctrines are ‘exterminate the demons’ and ‘defeat the demon king’. We are plotting with the demons!? These stupid words are spoken by this mouth? Let me kiss it!”

“St- Stop! Or I will add ‘hindering the police’ to your crimes! St- Stop! You guys, take this man away, quickly...! Ah, stop, nooo!!”

After Zesta pushed down the female knight, he was suppressed while other Axis Cultists demanded the police to reveal what is going on.

After being released at the last moment, the female knight had tears in her eyes and quickly kept her distance from Zesta.

“Ha... ah...! As I said earlier! The prediction from Home of the Crimson Magic has never been wrong. In this regard, considering the usual behavior of your people, there is no need to say more. In summary, we need to inquire about the current situation from this perverted manager. Depending on the interrogation, we may have to interrogate other people as well!”

Cecily pestered the female knight who was starting to calm down.

“Please wait! Lord Zesta is indeed a hopeless pervert. Every time he excitedly peeked at the bathroom, I will wonder if smacking his head hard would cure him! Lord Zesta’s perversion aside, you say that we will betray Lady Aqua and ally with the demons? This is impossible, you cow-tits woman! I will cut off those two soft excess fat!”

“Stop! Wh- Why are you lot so prone towards sexual harassment, regardless of gender! Hey, take this pervert away quickly! You lot listen up. Before the interrogation of this man is ended, honestly... Hey, stop! Rea- Really enough. Leave this place quickly... Ah, stop!? Stop!”

“This is a plot by Eris Cultists! Don’t be deceived! Eris Cultists are afraid of my leadership qualities and set a trap for me by manipulating this brainless woman...!”

The female knight looked like she was about to cry as Cecily pulled on her blouse. Yet she successfully escaped with Zesta, who was still protesting loudly—

PART 8

After Zesta was taken away, the remaining cultists stood uncertainly in the church.

“What should we do... Without Lord Zesta, what will this cult become?”

Cecily frowned as she mumbled to herself.

“Mr. Zesta is the highest ranking official, right? Without him, will there any problem? I will help out. Until Mr. Zesta returns, let’s protect this church?”

I patted Cecily’s back to encourage her.

“Bu- But... That’s true. It can’t go on like this. Let’s divide up Lord Zesta’s usual duties among ourselves...! ...I say, what duties does Lord Zesta usually do?”

With her spirit slightly lifted, Cecily asked the other cultists.

“.....Confessions are handled by specialists. Is it the cult’s financial management?”

“Finances are handled by the secretary. Healing the wounded... That’s also handled by specialists. Lord Zesta basically just wandered around. I have never seen him use magic.”

“Even when he preached on the streets, it wasn’t to spread the cult’s doctrines. It was usually about using gender equality as an excuse to implement a law to enforce mixed gender bath.”

The cultists said one after another, then remained silent for a moment.

“.....I say, what does Lord Zesta actually do?”

As Cecily mumbled to herself, the remaining people expressed doubt.

“Miss Megumin. The problem is solved. Even without Lord Zesta, there won’t be any major issue. Thanks for your concern.”

“Is- Is this okay!? He is after all your representative!? And that female knight is putting suspicion on the entire Axis Cult. Is this really

okay?”

The Axis Cultists were about dispersed. Hearing my words, they frowned.

“That’s true. It’s common for Lord Zesta to be arrested. That isn’t a major problem. But it is distressing to be accused of helping the demons whom Lady Aqua hates. Given our usual good conduct, why would we suddenly be suspected?”

Hearing Cecily, Yunyun trembled for some reasons.

Seeing her expression, I could understand somewhat.

“.....Yunyun?”

“Wh- What is it!?”

I said to Yunyun, who was stuttering and looking away.

“.....Even if you cannot accept Mr. Zesta physically, you can’t accuse an innocent man, okay?”

“I- I didn’t! I didn’t make any accusation. Besides, even if I can’t handle that uncle well, I don’t hate him to that extent...!”

I looked at the panicking Yunyun suspiciously.

“Then, why are you trembling? Your current expression is exactly like my sister when she wanted to quickly learn fire magic to destroy the evidence of her wetting the bed.”

“Komekko intended to do something like that!? No- No! That... I say...”

Yunyun put her hands together to play with her fingers.

“.....Actually, when I left Home of the Crimson Magic, the diviner Soksetto asked me for help. Well... She said she saw disaster befalls this city in the future. Since I’m going to Alcanretia, she asked me to deliver a letter containing her predictions... After that...”

She said this and lowered her head in apology—

INTERLUDE: SCENE 3

Lady Aqua, I Would Not Admit Defeat! 2

Something major happened today.

Today, I drew graffiti on the statue of the goddess Eris for amusement as usual. While I was being chased everywhere by the evil Eris Cultists...

A magical Lolita suddenly appeared and rescued me when I was about to be captured by the Eris Cultists.

What was happening?

Was this a reward for my persistence in vandalizing the statue of the goddess Eris?

“My name is Megumin! The top wizard in Crimson Magic Clan, one who uses Explosion magic! Hmph! Since I’m here, I will not ignore this!”

The wizard girl said and made a cool pose. She was the type I liked.

So cute. Like an angel, she was in my strike zone.

What was this kid? An angel?

“Hey, you are of Crimson Magic Clan!? Wa- Wait, you made a mistake! We are the victims!”

“Ca- Calm down! Let’s talk this over!”

The two Eris Cultists hurriedly searched for explanations...

“What a pity. You could have tricked the stupid people, but in my crimson eyes, that kind of excuses will not help you!”

I thought she may be an angel. It seemed she really was an angel.

She believed me unconditionally. I was so happy. I wanted to take her home!

No, oh dear, oh dear. I could barely stop myself from embracing her in public!

I was warned by the police just last week. It wouldn't go well if I simply pounced on her.

I must calm down.

"No, you need to have your crimson eyes checked!"

One guy grumbled. Yes, now is the moment!

"Yeah, we are the Eris Cultists in this city... Ah!? This is bad!"

I pushed away the hand that was grabbing me and escaped into the alley.

Luckily, those two Eris Cultists did not follow.

I peeked from the alley and discovered that the Lolita who rescued me was panicking.

How cute.

"Hey, how are you going to compensate this! That woman was an Axis Cultist! She drew graffiti on the statue of Lady Eris in our church!"

After being scolded by the angry man, the Lolita trembled.

Next time, I will pour a lot of Tokoroten Slime into that guy's mail box.

"Before that, she took all the bread that our cult prepared to feed the poor!"

I was the poor, so I had the right to eat those bread.

The real misfortune was my love life.

Since the handsome youth with the magic sword left me, I hoped this Lolita could love me.

"That. Uh, I'm really sorry... I- I just arrived in this city recently..."

The two Eris Cultists approached as the panicking Lolita explained.

At this moment, I turned to look at the other end of the alley.

After all, i was very experienced and knew his route well.

At this time, that guy would definitely be patrolling this area... There he is!

I grabbed his hand and made my accusation with tears in my eyes.

“Please help! The Eris Cultists who were chasing me suddenly abuse a little girl...!”

“Eris Cultists!? No, they won’t do such things...”

I ignored his suspicion and pointed in the direction of those Eris Cultists.

“Policeman! These are the people!”

—Lady Aqua, I Would Not Admit Defeat!

Chapter 4

SAVIORS OF THE CITY OF WATER



PART 1

The next day morning.

Yunyun and I stayed in the cult. We walked towards the hall where the Axis Cultists gathered.

“Remember, Yunyun. You were only delivering a message for someone from Home of the Crimson Magic, so there is no need to blame yourself. Face them confidently.”

“I-I understand! That’s right. I was just delivering a letter. Even if that uncle was taken away for interrogation, that... ugh, hm... has nothing to do with me!”

After thinking for a while, Yunyun raised her head sharply.

After Zesta was taken away, this kid had been blaming herself...

“That’s the resolve we want. After all, if his usual conduct is good, it should be possible to argue it over. It’s his own fault that he was taken away so easily. If he is proven innocent, he should be released soon, so there’s no need to be concerned.”

“Ye-Yes! I understand. Even if the cultists blame me— no matter what they say! I will remain strong!”

Yunyun made her decision and said, opening the doors of the church...!

“Oh, good morning, Miss Megumin and Miss Yunyun. Did you sleep well?”

Cecily was there eating breakfast with her hair still in mess.

“Good morning... Only elder sister is watching the house? Where did the other Axis Cultists go?”

“Everyone went out early in the morning. If this goes on, Lord Zesta will be removed as the highest ranking official, so we need to decide on a new person to take the post. This decision involves voting by Axis Cultists. In other words, everyone is busy preparing for the election.”

.....Election.

“Then... Before the election, will people be finding evidence in the

city to absolve Zesta of his alleged crimes?”

“? Why would we do such troublesome and boring things? Don’t worry. If he didn’t commit crimes, he will come back soon. If he doesn’t come back, that’s fine too. After our discussion, we concluded that it will be better without Lord Zesta, so just let him be...”

“Are you serious!? Miss Cecily, maybe as the one who delivered the letter, I should not say this. But is this really okay? Is it really okay not to rescue him?”

Yunyun said worriedly as she shook Cecily, who was still eating an egg.

She said earlier that she would remain strong, but her sense of guilt was stronger.

“Eben if jou say bat... The police is still investigating. Lord Zesta is indeed responsible for the source of the hot springs. It is a fact that the repeated complaints involve his jurisdiction. It is better to let them carefully investigate Lord Zesta and find out the truth.”

Cecily said as she continued eating.

“And besides—“

She swallowed the food in her mouth.

“I heard that the powerful diviner from Crimson Magic Clan is always accurate in her predictions. According to hearsay, she used suspicious demonic power to see the future and perform intricate divination. That’s why even though everyone usually sleep in until noon, they got up early in the morning to work today.”

To-Too much.

“Soketto’s predictions are indeed accurate... but even so, someone should at least involve in Mr. Zesta’s innocence... Ah, but you at least believe in him right? After all, you remained here instead of going to get votes.”

“Me? I overslept because I was celebrating Lord Zesta’s arrest and

drank too much last night. Of course, after eating, I have to go out as well...”

“That’s too much! Megumin, what should we do! I didn’t think that delivering a letter will result in this...!”

Yunyun was in panic and was almost in tears. But since the cultists had no intention of saving him, then it couldn’t be helped.

Seriously, she even said earlier that this had nothing to do with her.

“No problem, Miss Yunyun. Lord Zesta should be happily being interrogated by that female knight right now. It won’t be right to disturb him. Compared to that, can you help me? The salary will be right. Because of my past conduct, the citizens remembered my face, so they will be reprehensive even if it is just a casual conversation. Therefore, I would like you to...!”

“What can I do about that!? Hey, Megumin, you say something to her too...!”

“How much is the pay?”

“Let me think... 10,000 eris for every additional vote...”

“.....”

“Wait, wait. I know! Yunyun, I know, so stop casting the magic!”

“Eld-Elder sister will give you some bacon! Please calm down quickly!”

PART 2

After hot-tempered Yunyun calmed down, we strolled in the city for an hour.

As she walked in front, Yunyun turned around as if she wanted to say something.

“Meg-Megumin... That...”

“...After running out of the Axis Cult’s church, you don’t have any

place to go, so you don't know what to do— right?”

“..... Yes.”

Yunyun nodded in embarrassment.

“Miss Megumin, please don't be angry with Miss Yunyun! Look, look at her red face! Ah, she's really so cute! How adorable!! No problem. Elder sister is not a stranger, so you can be casual and call me Sis Cecily, okay!!”

Cecily, who followed us for some reasons, was moved by what she heard and embraced Yunyun.

I said to Cecily.

“Then, elder sister. Are you free?”

“Call me Sis Cecily!”

“Elder sister, there is something I want to ask... The female knight said that this cult is responsible for managing the source of the hot springs and that the hot spring hotels were complaining since yesterday.”

“Yes. I decided I won't turn back to the past and thus cannot really remember, but it seems there were such complaints.”

Is this elder sister really okay...

“The-Therefore... I think we should visit the hot spring hotels that lodged a complaint. Although there was an unnatural change in the hot springs, it might not be the same thing that was mentioned in the divination. We should first investigate what actually happened. It might not be a case, but merely an accident.”

“...I see. But I will bet 10,000 eris that Lord Zesta is a criminal!”

“Mis-Miss Cecily, this is too much!”

Yunyun shouted while she was still being embraced.



But which hot spring hotel should we start with...

.....Eh?

“What is happening? There is some commotion over there.”

“Hm—? Oh, isn’t that our cult member?”

There was a man before us whom we had seen before in the church.

“—I didn’t think such things could happen... No, Lord Zesta truly has been a lot of trouble, but he won’t ally with the demon king’s army...”

“No, I can understand your feelings. After seeing the good conduct of our Axis Cultists, it is impossible to believe it easily— I can understand this feeling!”

“No, it isn’t unbelievable to that extent. How should I say this? I feel that if these are the people involved, then you can’t blame them, so I believed...”

We overheard their conversation. It seemed to be about Lord Zesta’s arrest.

But the contents were a bit strange.

“As a fellow Axis Cultist, I feel ashamed for Lord Zesta. The reputation that was ruined by Lord Zesta... no, Zesta. I will definitely restore it!”

“I feel that there won’t be much of a difference with or without Lord Zesta. By the way, can I leave now? I need to water the rice fields...”

It looked like an Axis Cultist intercepted a passing farmer and started indoctrinating him.

“Water the rice fields! Where did the water come from? ...That’s right! It came from the rain blessed by Lady Aqua, the goddess of water. What kind of city is this? ...That’s right! This is Alcanretia, the City of Water and Hot Spring! This is the city patronized by Lady Aqua! In other words, it is only right for everyone in the city to join the Axis Cult! Come, you should join Axis Cult too...!”

“Ah, as a farmer, I have always been an Axis Cultist. I have always been grateful to Lady Aqua.”

“Oh, is that so? That makes it simpler then. Actually, due to Lord Zesta’s arrest, there is currently a need to elect a new highest ranking official. This will be decided by votes. Every Axis Cultist will have the right to vote. So...”

The topic took a very strange turn.

“I have in my hands the panties of the pretty priestess from Eris Cult, retrieved while it was being dried in the backyard... Do you understand what I’m trying to say?”

“.....You are such a jerk. Or should I say, you are truly an Axis Cultist.”

The cultist pulled on both sides of the panties to show the farmer.

“Hm? This panties...”

“Ah, is there an Axis Cultist who is worthy of my vote? ...Oh, it must be fate to meet you here. What is your name?”

“My name... Ah, I have a pen, but no paper... Fine, I will write on this panties, so you can take it as a name card!”

“If it is a name card, then it can’t be helped! I see, I see... Okay, I remember! I have been waiting for someone like you to show up in Axis Cult...!”

The cultist and the farmer shared a look and smiled.

“May Lady Aqua bless you!” X2

Cecily and I used all our strength to ram them from behind.

We originally came closer to merely to eavesdrop.

The two people fell down after being ambushed.

“Wh-What are you doing!”

“Damn it, is this an ambush by Eris Cultists!? What, Cecily!? What are you doing? This is a rare chance to get a vote!”

Both men got up and protested.

“It’s not what we are doing! Mr. Zesta was just arrested. What are you doing!?”

“Megumin is right! Isn’t that Zesta guy a comrade in your cult!? What are you talking about while holding on to a pair of panties! Really unacceptable! Quick, Miss Cecily should say some...”

“Isn’t that my panties! What is that about being the panties of the pretty priestess from Eris Cult! You better correct it, and say that this is the panties of the pretty priestess of Axis Cult! And if you want that panties, you should vote for me instead!!”

Maybe it would be better to leave this person behind in the church.

As I watched Cecily grab the men’s collars, I had a bad feeling about all this.

PART 3

“Please vote for Tristan! Please vote for the financial manager of Axis Cult, Tristan! Please let your righteous vote go to the one who single-handedly managed the finances of the cult, Tristan!”

The bad feeling was on its mark.

Shouting in the streets before us was the elder sister who served as Zesta’s secretary.

“I promise everyone that when I become the highest ranking official of Axis Cult, I will do the following! Firstly, I will legalize polygamy! Secondly, I will bring the marriageable age even lower!”

The person who was supposed to be most loyal to Zesta—

“Thirdly, as long as there is love, it doesn’t matter if you are siblings...”

“What are you saying in front of the crowd?”

Yunyun and I rushed forward and subdued her.

“What are you doing? Interrupting my election campaign... Ha, don’t

tell me it's Eris Cult..."

"I had enough of this! Or rather— I beg you not to create more problems!"

This elder sister, who was Zesta's secretary, was the 11th person.

That is also the number of problem-making election campaigns that we stopped.

"If you want to host such strange events, please wait until Mr. Zesta is convicted. Everybody else has returned to the church. Please obediently stay in the church for today."

".....I think Lord Zesta is definitely guilty. If you don't believe, I will bet 10,000 eris on it."

"I heard enough of this! Please return to the church! ...Ah, seriously. We can't investigate like this!"

The Axis Cultists were using any means necessary to get votes in the city. The public order of Alcanretia had become unbearable.

There were people who bribed and people who threatened.

And even people who seduced and cheated.

There were even people soliciting votes from cats and dogs. I didn't know how they could possibly let animals believe in religion.

—Yunyun and I sat on the bench in the park.

"Why are the Axis Cultists so energetic..."

"I already want to return to the Home of the Crimson Magic..."

Both of us lowered our heads and mumbled tiredly...

"Sorry for waiting! Cooling Tokoroten Slime! Try this smooth feeling that will get you addicted! This is my treat! What will happen after you join Axis Cult... I don't need to tell you, right?"

Cecily, who was prancing around energetically, came over with some drinks.

What is Tokoroten Slime?

This thing made people hesitate on drinking it.

Yunyun and I took it fearfully, but neither of us drank it. We seemed to be thinking the same thing.

“.....Okay. We got side-tracked due to the unexpected hindrances. It's time to visit the hotels for investigation. Let's see what actually happened.”

PART 4

After arriving at the hot spring hotel, we received an expected answer.

“.....Tokoroten Slime.”

“That's right. It's Tokoroten Slime. It's that smooth tasty thing that solidifies at low temperature. When we turn on the tap of the hot springs, Tokoroten Slime flows out.”

—That was the situation.

Turning on the tap will produce tasty drinks.

.....What could I say, was this really the work of demon king's army to destroy the city?

At this time, the unmotivated Cecily suddenly came forward with her eyes glowing.

“I need to examine the scene. That's right. As a member of the accused Axis Cult, there is a need for strict investigation!”

“Uh, okay... Then, please come this way...”

“By the way, what flavor is it? What flavor is the Tokoroten Slime!?”

“I-I think it's grape...”

“Awesome!! Grape-flavored Tokoroten Slime is the best!”

Instead of being led, the excited Cecily seemed to be leading the hotel owner inside.

.....Did this person lose sight of her goals?

“—This is too much, Miss Megumin! Miss Yunyun too!! It is every citizen’s dream to have Tokoroten Slime to flow out of the taps! But you won’t even let me taste it!”

“The mysterious liquid from the hot spring taps is not drinkable. What if it is poisoned? ...By the way, what exactly is Tokoroten Slime? Is it a wild monster that tastes good when drunk?”

After leaving the hotel, we brought along the grumbling Cecily.

The hotel owner brought us to the scene. It was really flowing with Tokoroten Slime.

I forcefully took the excited Cecily with us as we left the hotel...

“Tokoroten Slime is a gelatinous matter composed of various edible slimes. After drying, it is grinded into powder and then flavors will be added. The mixture will be melted in hot water for a while to produce an incredibly sticky substance. After it is cooled, it will solidify into the elastic substance.”

Yunyun and I looked at each other.

This shouldn’t be a case anymore.

Someone added Tokoroten Slime powder into the source of the hot springs, intentionally allowing people to consume it anytime anywhere by turning on the taps...!

.....How insane did the person have to be to do this as a sabotage?

“I’m sorry. This is stupid beyond belief. Can I go back now?”

“Wait! I understand how you feel, but what if this really is the unnatural change Socketto predicted...”

True. Although this was ridiculous, Socketto’s predictions were beyond doubt.

In this case, the criminal who did this had to be Zesta...

"It can't be helped then... Let's take a look at the source of this city's hot springs."

—There was a mountain behind the city that was the source of the hot springs.

People used pipelines to bring the spring water into the city...

"This is where the waters from the mountain are supplied into the city's hot spring hotels! And since this is controlled by the Axis Cult, we are allowed to do as we please in the city!"

"This cult is so insidious... It is only retribution when they are blamed for such incidents."

Led by Cecily, we arrived at the huge facility that supplied the city's hot spring waters.

The purification and cleansing process in this facility was usually performed by Axis Cultists in shifts.

But for some reasons, since yesterday, Zesta personally came to do this.

This was one of the reasons for being the suspect.

When we arrived, someone was already here.

".....Ugh, Axis Cultists. You are late. The evidence was taken."

There were a few policemen here.

They were holding on to big sacks.

"Is that sack containing Tokoroten Slime powder? Then, did Mr. Zesta really do this silly thing...?"

"Yes. Last night, there was an eye-witness who saw Lord Zesta bringing this sack into the facility. The evidence is piling up, so there will be no more excuse."

.....If there was eye-witness, then it was game over.

But.

“Why did Mr. Zesta do this silly thing? Honestly, turning the hot springs into Tokoroten Slime is really an insane work of sabotage.”

“Yes. We can’t understand why he did this either. If he wants to destroy the hot springs, he could simply add poison. But if it is done by an Axis Cultist, then everything can be explained away.”

I got nothing to say.

If it was these weirdos, even if you asked them why did they do such silly things, they would probably say it was because it was fun.

“Why is it like this... I thought he was just a bit weird, but not evil to this extent...”

Yunyun said dejectedly as she desperately wanted to prove his innocence.

At this time, Cecily...

“If this facility is where the Tokoroten Slime was added, drinking from the taps here should be fine. Hey, does anyone have a cup? Then, can anyone use freezing magic?”

.....This was why Axis Cultists were—

PART 5

“In the end, we couldn’t do anything. I can’t believe Mr. Zesta would do such a thing...”

On the way back from the facility.

Disheartened, the three of us walked on.

“...Yes. Did that uncle really collude with the demons? It doesn’t feel like that though...”

Although it was only a short while, Yunyun and Zesta knew each other for some time.

If that person was involved with the demon king's army, she would be shocked.

Then, the most dispirited person among us, Cecily, mumbled sadly to herself.

"They say it is an evidence, so I cannot drink it... There are so much right there, yet I can't drink..."

This person was depressed over a completely different reason by herself.

"This has already happened, so it can't be helped. Although he is either a criminal or a demon king's minion, I still think he isn't really a bad guy. After paying for his crime, he should return."

"If I remember correctly, it is capital punishment for treason..."

Hearing Yunyun's serious explanation, both Cecily and I broke out in cold sweat.

—At this moment.

"I said this before! As an honest Axis Cultist! Me! That's right, me!? As the highest ranking official of the Axis Cult, how could I possibly assist the demons!?"

"I'm really sorry, Lord Zesta! Concerning this matter, please let it rest..."

We were walking along the street when we heard this familiar voice from ahead.

In that place was...

"Lord Zesta!?"

"If an apology can solve problems, we won't need you people anymore! If you are retrenched and jobless, please remember to join our cult... Eh, isn't this Miss Cecily? Why are you here? Ah, you are waiting for me to be released!"

The energetic Lord Zesta was brought along by a weary female knight.

“Lord Zesta? Why are you here... and release...”

Zesta pointed at the building he just came out from.

“What are you saying? This is the police station, Miss Megumin. As for why I’m being released, of course, it is because my innocence was proven.”

“Ah!?” X3

“Why are you so surprised? How could I possibly commit such a stupid crime? Hey, you should confirm my innocence too.”

Urged on by Zesta, the female knight said in resignation.

“.....Because of our negligence this time, we wrongfully arrested the honest Axis Cultist Lord Zesta. I’m truly sorry...”

What happened in the midst of the investigation?

“Hey, you lot, fall in! Lord Zesta is going back!”

“Ye-Yes! We are very sorry, Lord Zesta!”

“Th-This time, we were really too negligent...!”

At the female knight’s orders, a few policemen rushed out of the station.

Among them was the person who said that the evidence was piling up.

He said so confidently that the evidence was damning, so what actually happened?

“That self-righteous, bespectacled interrogator who used the lie detector magic item— please thank her properly for me! Thanks to her, my suspicion was finally cleared! It was so enjoyable to witness that self-confident callous look break out tears!”

“Ugh...! Th-That person will soon be transferred to Axel City. We have given Lord Zesta an unhappy memory. We are really sorry...”

Looking at the dissatisfied female knight bowing her head in apology,

I thought I understood what was going on.

The police stations in large cities usually possessed lie detector magic items.

Lord Zesta was bragging in self-satisfaction. It seemed that was the reason.

“Oh dear. A transfer huh? That is a pity! Please tell her for me, after going to Axel City, please do not repeat this mistake of arresting an innocent man and subjecting him to false accusations.”

“I-I understand...”

The female knight watched him come towards us.

“Then, let’s go. I have wasted much of my precious time. Really, how are you going to compensate? By right, I should lie beneath your feet and lick your toes one by one. But since I’m so generous, I will forgive you.”

“...Th-Thank you for your mag-magnanimity...”

Zesta got even more carried away as he used a fan-like object to pat the head of the female knight who was bowing deeply.

“Don’t just grow your breasts. You should grow a bit of brains too!”

He smiled happily and turned to leave.

The female knight grinded her teeth and glared murderously at Zesta’s silhouette...

PART 6

On the way back to the church.

“I must have really worried everyone. I didn’t expect Miss Cecily to welcome me personally.”

As our group increased to four people, we walked along the sunset streets in a cheerful mood that was completely different from before.

“Of course! I, Cecily, am the first to believe in Lord Zesta’s innocence! I waited outside the station since early this morning!”

Cecily, who was celebrating his arrest last night, smiled as she lied through her teeth.

Th-This fellow...!

As if she noticed Yunyun and I were staring at her, Cecily maintained her smile and held my hand. She secretly handed something to me and nodded.

Oh... hush money.

I was of the noble and unsullied Crimson Magic Clan.

That’s right. Noble Crimson Magic Clan.

I was not an easy woman who would be moved by such bribes, but I should at least check how much money there was...

“Uh, Miss Cecily? Can you not push these Tokoroten Slime to me? I can’t understand what you are thinking...”

Yunyun was puzzled at having something pushed into her hand. As I heard her words, I silently threw away the powder in my hand.

“Everyone, stop playing. Let’s go back early. Everyone in the cult should be quite worried. Oh dear, even though I was in the police station, I heard quite a few things! According to hearsay, after my arrest, the people in the cult were causing trouble in the city, disturbing public order or something... They were protesting against my arrest, right? Really, although I’m happy at everyone’s good will, causing trouble is still not acceptable, okay?”

Zesta said in a ludicrous attitude. His smile never left his face since we met him.

Yunyun and I looked away.

“That’s true. I can understand what everyone feels. After all, when Lord Zesta was arrested, I was drinking in depression until late at night!”

Cecily continued to lie shamelessly...

This elder sister... we should just let her be.

If we interrupted, something would be done to us later.

But...

"But in the end, the problem isn't resolved. There is still someone who added the Tokoroten Slime into the hot springs..."

Zesta tilted his head as if he was confused.

"True. The person responsible for this disturbance is still at large. I don't know what happened, but I remember that the divination from Crimson Magic Clan said that it involved the minion of the demon king..."

Yunyun said with a complicated expression.

"But will the dangerous demon king's minions do such hopeless things? We are talking about adding Tokoroten Slime into the hot springs here. If it is the demon king's minion, it should be a demon, right? Would a demon do something like a kid's prank..."

At this time, Cecily listened and said.

"Could this be a reward from Lady Aqua? After all, Tokoroten Slime flowing from the taps is my childhood dream."

".....Are you the criminal, elder sister?"

"I won't do such wasteful deed. If I have enough to throw into the hot springs, I will definitely hoard it all for myself!"

I was speechless. Zesta, who was walking next to me, showed a serious expression that I had never seen on him. He pondered in silence.

".....Demon king's minion... Demon... Oh dear. There is a slight stink in this city for some time. Is this the smell of demon...?"

"Mr. Zesta. You are frowning. You heard the word 'demon' and suddenly..."

Yunyun looked at the troubled Zesta fearfully, then looked behind us and became even more nervous.

I noticed Yunyun's reaction and turned around...

I saw someone standing there and I said to Chomsuke who was at my feet.

"To be followed to this place. You are truly held in high regard."

The person there was a deeply hooded demon— the faintly smiling Anis.

PART 7

Anis smiled faintly and happily looked at Yunyun and me.

I carried Chomsuke and backed off to Yunyun's side.

".....It has been a while. Ah, thanks for the hospitality last time."

"What is this situation!? Miss Megumin, Miss Yunyun. Who is this sexy lady!?"

As Zesta shouted words that didn't fit the mood, Anis smiled maliciously.

Yunyun retrieved her staff from her waist and held it before her warily.

I stood at Yunyun side, as if using Chomsuke as a shield, carried her before me.

".....For you to so blatantly appear in this city. Do you really want my Chomsuke so much?"

"Miss Megumin. What is your relationship with this lady with her remarkable twin peaks!?"

"It's not Chomsuke. Call her Lady Wolbach... This time, you won't have those hateful companions for help. By right, I could just tear you apart, but if I simply finish off someone liked by Lady Wolbach
—"

“Miss Megumin, please answer me! Why did this person dress so indecently! And to cover it up with a robe is improper! Simply improper! But while being improper, it is also beautiful in a well-tempered way. That’s right. To describe this, it is like wearing a coat over a swimsuit. It is that immoral feeling...”

“Hey, you are noisy! What are you doing? Get lost!”

After her speech was interrupted by Zesta, Anis waved him off in annoyance.

“Mr. Zesta. Don’t incite her too much. This Anis is our enemy. She wants this furball, so she chased us here.”

“Oh, you want Chomsuke. You look stiff, but you have a romantic heart, Miss Anis.”

“Both of you stop it... She looks more and more annoyed...”

Hearing Yunyun, I looked at Anis. She narrowed her eyes and arteries were protruding at the side of her head.

She seemed annoyed by our unexpected lack of unease.

“Listen up. If you don’t want to suffer...”

“What can I do to receive your suffering?”

“M-Mr. Zesta!”

Yunyun never pay attention to the mood. She warned the overly bold Zesta as usual.

“Strange fellows. As you wish...!”

Anis smiled and raised her hand quickly.

“Let you suffer a bit! Fire Ball!”

A fire ball surged from Anis’ hand towards Zesta.

Against this...!

“A female demon huh...”

With a regretful sigh, Zesta reached towards the fire ball.

“Reflect!”

“!?”

Zesta suddenly created a wall of light, which bounced the fire ball back.

Anis dodged the incoming fire ball and looked at Zesta in shock.

Her actions threw off her hood, revealing the horns on her head.

“.....Oh dear. I thought you are just a weird uncle. You are quite capable.”

I couldn't help but agree with Anis.

I also thought Zesta was just a weird uncle.

Zesta sighed deeply.

“Ah... Female demon... I can accept beastman or ogre, but only female demon— Axis Cult's doctrines do not allow me to love. What a pity.”

He said and turned to face Anis.

“Demon... I see. Demon huh. It is indeed stinking of demons.”

Although Zesta was smiling gently, there was no smile at all in his eyes.

Even when faced with Zesta in this manner, Anis was unmoved.

After a moment of confronting Zesta, Anis showed a fearless smile.

“A stink of demons? You dare to say that. And? What can a mere human priest do?”

“—This lord can send you to ruin.”

“!?”

Anis turned hurriedly. Nobody knew when Cecily went around behind

Anis.

There was no sense of mischief in Cecily now.

Zesta was the same.

Although both of them looked the same as usual, there was no friendliness in their eyes.

But Anis did not retreat.

“You are so eloquent! As the servitor of the great evil god, Lady Wolbach, I...”

“Sacred High Exorcism!”

Zesta interrupted Anis’ speech and released his magic.

The magic did not hit Anis, but passed by her head to strike at the road.

The spot hit by the magic displayed a white magic circle, and bright light shone into the clouds.

Anis saw this and opened then closed her mouth in fright.

That was a magic that I did not recognize, but it must be fatal to demons.

That was clear when I saw Anis shivered as she stared at Zesta.

.....I thought he was just a weird uncle.



“I apologize. My self-introduction is late, Miss Anis.”

Anis heard Zesta’s words and trembled.

“I am Zesta, the arch priest in charge of Axis Cult.”

Anis understood the meaning of this statement and broke out in cold sweat.

“In the Axis Cult that I’m responsible for, there is no arch priest who is higher in level than me.”

Anis’ face turned pale and she retreated step by step.

“Same. I’m Cecily, the pretty priestess of Axis Cult.”

Hearing Cecily’s word, Anis shivered as she remembered there was someone behind her.

“Miss Cecily. It looks like the culprit of this disturbance is this female demon.”

“That seems like it, Lord Zesta. The trouble you have gone through was at the expense of this demon, right?”

“Wh-What!? What are you saying!? I-I came to this city, but I was searching for Lady Wolbach all this time...”

Anis stuttered in denial, but Zesta was no longer listening.

As Zesta started running, Anis turned and ran pass Cecily.

“She is escaping, Miss Cecily! Chase quickly! Everything is permissible since it is a demon! In the name of Axis Cult, let her regret being born a demon!”

“Roger! Lord Zesta! Demons should be hung up and beaten—!”

As they made their dangerous announcements, Zesta and Cecily charged towards Anis, who was fleeing for her life in tears.

PART 8

“...What is going on?”

“Don’t ask me. How am I supposed to know?”

After being left behind, we stared dumbly in the direction where Zesta had gone.

“...Okay. What does Yunyun want to do next? I’m going to stay here until I earn enough money. After that, I will go to Axel City. I originally intended to go to Axel to find companions. Now, I heard there is a wizard who can use Explosion magic as well.”

Although they might not be the same person, I had no other lead anyway.

“I... I-I always intend to go to Axel City and start training with the weak monsters...”

“I see. What a coincidence. Then you go on ahead. I will catch up after I have enough money.”

“Eh!?”

Hearing this, Yunyun looked troubled.

“B-But! I’m not in a hurry to leave. I think I can tour this city a bit before going to Axel...”

Yunyun widened her eyes and said uneasily.

At this time, Chomsuke slowly walked to Yunyun’s feet.

For some reasons, Chomsuke looked at Yunyun as if demanding something, but Yunyun hurriedly looked away.

.....

“By the way, since I arrived in this city, someone has been feeding Chomsuke. Do you know anything about that?”

“I-I don’t know!? Chomsuke is a cat and can find its own food!?”

She continued to stutter and look away.

Chomsuke remained at Yunyun’s feet as if expecting something.

“.....It is looking at Yunyun with hopeful eyes.”

“Maybe it wants to play since we haven’t met for a long time! Th-

Then, let's return to the hotel! I'm staying in the hotel near the city entrance. If there is anything..."

"—Oh, Miss Megumin. You are still here. Oh dear, that demon is really agile. It was too delightful to watch her crying face, so a few shots of fatal magic intentionally missed her. We accidentally let her escaped."

As if to replace Yunyun who was about to leave, Zesta returned in satisfaction and said in a long-winded manner.

".....You look rather happy."

"What are you saying? It is regretful that she escaped, but it can't be helped. Miss Cecily is searching for that demon with the other cultists... If it is convenient, Miss Megumin, please take this."

Zesta took my hand and placed a small sack there.

".....? What is this?"

"This is the carriage fee to Axel City."

I froze when I heard Zesta.

"The recruitment methods that Miss Megumin taught us will be effective in the future. I won't merely follow your recipes. Instead, we will experiment to improve them. That's right. We will develop our recruitment methods to the point of being a unique trait of this city. This carriage fee is just a little gift."

Looking at Zesta's confident expression, I started wondering if I really did something amazing.

"Then, Miss Megumin. What will you do today? Stay in Axis Cult? At this time, there should still be caravans heading for Axel. Want to go to Axel right away?"

Going to Axel right away.

.....I wanted to go immediately.

I wanted to reach Axel as fast as possible and report to that person.

Then gathered my companions and released Explosion magic which I had not used for so long!

“Go immediately!”

“Eh!?”

For some reasons, Yunyun exclaimed after hearing my impromptu decision... Ah, that was it.

“Yunyun wanted to tour this city, so I will go ahead to Axel first.”

“Ho-How can you do this! I-I changed my mind! If Megumin goes to Axel first, it will widen the distance between us!”

“I see. Yunyun is so hard working.”

“Ye-Yes!?”

Acting strong, Yunyun looked away as I smiled maliciously.

Looking at us, Zesta seemed to understand something.

“Miss Megumin. It is a rare opportunity, why not stay for another night before leaving? After all, there are probably some in the cult who want to bid you farewell.”

“What you say is true too. What should I do?”

“Eh!?”

—After that, Zesta and I made fun of Yunyun for a while. When she finally couldn't endure anymore and was about attack, the sky was already dark.

PART 9

“Phew...”

I exhaled deeply as I soaked in the open-air bath inside the Axis church.

Since this bath belonged to the cult, I was a bit worried about

peeping. But Zesta, the most dangerous person, was struck by lightning released by Yunyun after she was teased beyond her limits.

After that attack, he shouldn't wake until tomorrow.

Since it was the open-air bath of Axis Cult which worshipped the goddess of water, I expected it to be the size of a swimming pool. The truth was different, however.

Although you could stretch your legs, it would be very cramped if a few people entered.

"Today's hot spring is not bad, Miss Megumin. Heheh... Bathing with Lolita... Heheheh..."

"I'm sorry, but your laughter is really scary."

—Because even now it was already somewhat cramped.

"Please understand. For some reasons, this cult has very few females, so there is little opportunity to bathe with someone of the same gender."

"Elder sister, your eyes had been like a predator since the start, so I don't have the feeling of bathing with the same gender. After all, you sexually harassed me last night."

I was bathing with Cecily, who was the reason I became involved with the Axis Cult, but...

"Hey, it was already very cramped. If you keep leaning over..."

"This can't be helped, after all, the pool is small! That's right. I think even if my finger climbs onto Miss Megumin's soft skin, that is also inevitable!"

"I will retaliate if something weird is done to me! Don't think I will let you do whatever you want like last night!"

I moved away from Cecily, who was leaning really close, and lowered myself up to my mouth into the water.

"But I haven't been this happy for a long time. I feel you are quite compatible with Axis Cultist. I heard that you want to gather

companions in Axel City? If you are getting a priest, please select an Axis Cult priest! I think it will be a good match!”

“I-I don’t want. I want a serious Eris Cultist... I say, you should move away a bit...”

“The pool is so small, so I can’t help it. During the bath construction, even one of this size costs a lot of money. I heard it was made by a powerful wizard using Blast magic. Look, the pool’s shape is a beautiful circle, right?”

“Blast magic huh...”

I touched the edge of the pool and felt its smoothness. It was probably created by the blast of powerful magic.

“That’s right. Since there are few people who learnt Detonation magic, it was very hard to find one. Originally, we intended to find a wizard using Detonation magic.”

The elder sister soaked her neck into the hot spring and exhaled comfortably.

This bath inside the church was created from a crater in the flat bedrock blasted by magic.

Using Detonation magic here should enlarge the pool without causing harm.

...Then, if Explosion magic was used?

“Elder sister.”

“What? If possible, don’t call me ‘elder sister’. I will be very happy if you can call me ‘Sis Cecily’ while lisping.”

“Elder sister, do you want a more spacious open-air bath?”

“I do. Besides, this bath gets its water directly from the mountain, so no matter how big it is, it won’t lack water... Why? Your eyes are glowing.”

The bigger, the better.

If I used my staff to release the magic, the entire bedrock platform would be destroyed.

But what about if I used the magic empty-handed?

Since it was empty-handed, the magic power would be reduced by half. Such an Explosion magic should create the largest pool in this city.

I received the carriage fee from them for no good reason, so it would be nice to leave a parting gift.

“...I can use Explosion magic.”

“...Eh.”

No. No more excuses.

It wasn't a gift. I merely wanted to use Explosion magic here to create a large pool.

“I will use Explosion magic to create the largest pool in the City of Water and Hot Springs. Is that okay?”

“Of course! The doctrines of Axis Cult include ‘Do as you will so long it is not a crime.’ Follow your heart and use magic without care!”

.....Although it was only a brief thought—

A thought that “joining Axis Cult maybe isn't that bad” flashed across my mind.

“Then, elder sister.”

“Call me Sis!”

“El-Elder sister, please step back! It's dangerous! ...Then, I'll begin! This is the Explosion magic that I have been holding in since I came to Alcanretia!”

I got out of the bath with elder sister and aimed at the bedrock...!

“Explosion——!”

Today, I used Explosion magic.

More than the usual disturbance caused by Axis Cultists, more than the appearance of a mysterious female demon, and even more than the disturbance of a fire disaster... My Explosion stupefied the residents of this city—

PART 10

At the waiting area for the public carriage.

Yunyun and I were sent off by Zesta and the others. We were about to board the carriage for Axel.

“Oh dear. I didn’t know you could use Explosion magic. I really can’t thank you enough. A pool that large could easily contain every member in the cult.”

“Mixed bath is out of question, Lord Zesta.”

“Mixed bath is the best way to strengthen the bonds between comrades.”

“Mixed bath is out of question, Lord Zesta.”

“...Uh, no matter what, that open-air bath will become the private hot spring of Axis Cult. Please come and take a look when you return to this city.”

“That’s true. After I find my companions, if everyone wants to go on a holiday trip, I will come here first.”

“We will look forward to that day. At that time, we will show you our true strength. We will definitely stuff your pockets full of Axis Cult recruitment forms!”

I smiled at Zesta who was making some dangerous speeches, then boarded the carriage.

.....At this moment, Zesta suddenly did something unexpected.

Zesta made a prayerful pose as if casting magic.

“—May the goddess Aqua bless you with a safe journey! Blessing!”

I received Zesta's magic and bashfully lowered my head.

I felt like this was the first time I saw this uncle act like a priest.

At this time, Yunyun, who was sitting next to me, said to Zesta uneasily.

"Uh, uh...! Mr. Zesta, give me that magic too..."

"Pui!"

"Ah!"

Zesta spat on the floor, as if answering Yunyun.

After taking a hit from the lightning last night, he found out Yunyun was the one who delivered Socketto's letter and caused the disturbance. He was probably still bearing a grudge.

Even though he was the high priest, he was still so childish.

I consoled Yunyun who was grinding her teeth, and smiled bitterly at Zesta and the others.

Cecily reluctantly and secretly handed something to me.

It was a heavy sack.

That must be a parting gift.

"I didn't do much. I can't accept this thing..."

"It's nothing. It will become a necessary item for you... Just accept it. Kids shouldn't stand on ceremony!"

.....I thought she was a weird elder sister, yet she did this in the last moment.

I opened the sack in guilt, and saw a pile of paper as I imagined.

...Eh, this doesn't look like eris monetary notes...

Feeling curious, I examined the papers.

"Axis Cult Recruitment Form"

“Use them properly when you get to Axel City!”

I threw the papers hard at the elder sister.

“—Attention, all passengers. The carriage to Axel is about to depart!”

The uncle at the driver’s seat shouted.

—The City of Rookie Adventurers, Axel.

Firstly, I would use that as a base to find companions.

Preferably, a party that could match my advanced job.

A reliable and brave leader.

An unwavering frontline fighter.

A compassionate healer.

Plus me, who could analyze the battle with my intelligence and kill with a single hit.

I dreamt of that kind of future...

“Public carriage heading for Axel. Depart!”

I started on my journey towards Axel, the City of Adventurers—

INTERLUDE: SCENE 4

Lady Aqua, I Was Truly Blessed!

In the kitchen of Axis Cult.

“Miss Cecily, what happened? You looked very happy.”

Lord Zesta asked with a grin, as I was washing the dishes and smiling like a goddess.

“Your usual criminally cool smile is especially disgusting today.”

“Lord Zesta, I’m about spray detergent into your eyes... Heheh. Do you want to know why I’m so happy today? Do you want to know?”

Should I tell you~”

“...I’ll take a bath. You finish up the dish washing.”

“Lord Zesta, this is too much. You are the one who asked the question.”

I grabbed hold of Lord Zesta’s sleeve as he prepared to leave.

“...Actually, I have a date with Miss Megumin to bathe together.”

“!?”

Hearing my special announcement, Lord Zesta halted and swallowed his saliva.

“...Miss Cecily. You mean, you are going to bathe with that Lolita wizard girl and wash each other’s back?”

“That’s what I mean. This is Lady Aqua’s reward for my daily persistence in disturbing Eris Cult!”

For some reasons, Lord Zesta smiled scornfully at me, who was announced excitedly.

“Miss Cecily, it seems you have forgotten! Who is responsible for cleaning the source of the hot springs today? ...That’s right. It’s you, Miss Cecily!”

“!?”

Lord Zesta’s words instantly sent me to hell.

“An honest cultist like me is the one most worthy of Lady Aqua’s reward! Since Miss Cecily is busy and cannot make it to the date, I will go to the bath in your place...”

“Your logic is too weird, Lord Zesta! If you do this, you will be arrested! Ri-Right, Lord Zesta! Do you like Tokoroten Slime? Actually, I have been hoarding a huge amount of grape-flavored Tokoroten Slime...”

I retrieved my secret cache of Tokoroten Slime from the kitchen, planning to use it as bribe and let someone else take on the cleaning

duty for me.

Lord Zesta raised his hand to stop me as I lifted the sack of Tokoroten Slime.

“Miss Cecily, let’s make a deal.”

“Deal, huh? ...You want my voluptuous body...!”

“I’m not interested in your body, Miss Cecily. That’s not what I mean... Since you are bathing with Miss Megumin— You understand what I’m saying, right!?”

I looked at Lord Zesta who was itching for a try, and understood what he wanted.

“...I see. Leave it to me!”

“Miss Cecily, your insight is remarkable! Leave the cleaning duty to me! I make it spotlessly clean! In return— You know, Miss Cecily. You must... Miss Megumin’s... that and that... examine carefully...”

“I know, of course I understand, Lord Zesta! No need for details. I already understood your intentions fully! Then, I, Cecily, will proceed to battle!”

I gave Lord Zesta a deep bow.

“It’s up to you, Miss Cecily! ...Ah, right, Miss Cecily, I have never cleaned the source of hot springs before. Where is the detergent used for cleaning...”

I couldn’t contain my emotions any longer, and simply ignored Lord Zesta.

“Miss Megumin Miss Megumin Miss Megumin Miss Megumin Miss Megumin! You must wait for me. Elder sister will definitely clean every corner of your body...!”

“Miss Ce-Cecily, the detergent... Is it this!? This is the sack, right, Miss Cecily!?”

I ignored Lord Zesta and flew out of the kitchen.

Really, I didn't think Lord Zesta was also interested in counting the ceramic tile patterns on the floor.

I thought I was the only one who would count the floor pattern when I was cleaning the bath.

After bathing, I would tell him the number of patterns I counted.

—Lady Aqua, I Was Truly Blessed!

Chapter 5

VISITOR FROM THE HOME OF CRIMSON MAGIC



PART 1

I sat in the shaking carriage and sighed lightly.

“Really a group of strange people...”

From the carriage window, I could see Alcanretia in the distance.

Even the demon king had some measure of fear for the Axis Cult.

What we witnessed was probably just a small aspect of them.

While I was immersed in my thoughts, someone pulled on my clothes.

It was Yunyun, who was sitting next to me.

...This kid was having the same thoughts as me?

“Hey, Megumin, is there anything interesting or any strange creatures? Let me look through the window.”

She said such unsentimental words to me, who was sitting by the window.

“...Yunyun is so childish. I was reminiscing about something...”

“Ch-Childish!? Hey, wait a minute, my puberty growth is better than yours... Ah! What! Why are you sighing!”

I ignored Yunyun as she shook my shoulder and looked at the scenery beyond the window.

—The carriage was moving towards the City of Rookie Adventurers, Axel.

There were five seats per row in this big carriage. Including Yunyun and me, there were a total of 10 passengers.

I snatched the window seat immediately upon boarding...

“Hey, it has been an hour. Let me have the window seat for a while!”

“No way. In terms of my body clock, it has only been less than 10 minutes. Besides, when I took the window seat, you even complained and asked me not to do such childish things, right?”

“But it seems so enjoyable to look at the scenery outside the window!”

“Of course it is enjoyable. I don’t get to take a carriage often... Ah! I see Lizard Runners! There are two Lizard Runners competing for the female! Which one will win? I’m so concerned...”

“Hey, quick! Change and let me see!”

“Hehe... Your relationship is so good.”

Someone was watching us fight over the window seat and was laughing.

Or rather, every passenger in the carriage are smiling and looking at us.

As if embarrassed, Yunyun blushed and shrank her body. The auntie at the side offered her dessert.

“Young lady, have some.”

“Then I won’t stand on ceremony.”

“Hey!”

I reached out and took the dessert offered to Yunyun, who immediately reacted.

The auntie smiled kindly.

“Here, there’s one for you too. Since you’re going to Axel, are you going to become adventurers?”

The auntie offered the dessert to Yunyun and asked.

Overwhelmed by her favor, Yunyun received the dessert and gave half of it to Chomsuke, who was sniffing at it on her knees.

For some reasons, the girl opposite was staring at Chomsuke eating the dessert with glowing eyes.

“Yes. I intend to become an adventurer. First, I’m going to Axel to find companions... By the way, Yunyun, are you going to be an adventurer too? Your goal is to find weak monsters for training, right?”

“Eh!? I-I... What should I do? If I’m alone, I might get into trouble... I should find some companions...”

“True. Once we used up all our mana, we would be no different from ordinary people. Companions are necessary.”

“Th-That’s true! Megumin and I have the same idea! So Megumin, uh...”

“If a party has two wizards, the party will be unbalanced. I hope I can find a party that is lacking a wizard... What, Yunyun? Why are you panicking?”

“N-No! That’s true. Two wizards in the same party will spoil the balance...”

After panicking, Yunyun quickly became dejected and silently ate her dessert.

I looked at her puzzled. The auntie smiled.

“Both of you have crimson eyes, so you must be from Crimson Magic Clan, right? At Axel, both of you will be very popular. I hope you can find your desired companions.”

Her words caused an uproar in the carriage.

“Crimson Magic Clan? There are two Crimson Magic Clansmen in the carriage?”

“We can relax on this trip. We won’t get our turn to act.”

“Anyway, no monsters will attack such a large trade caravan.”

It seemed there were adventurers on guard duty for the caravan among the passengers.

“Don’t worry. I’m the top genius of Crimson Magic Clan. Even if monsters attack, nobody will be hurt in my presence!”

“Oooh!”

“That’s the Crimson Magic Clan for you!”

“Hey, wait, Megumin! Since there are guards, let them do the job! Megumin’s magic will only cause more damage!”

Yunyun warned me softly, but I couldn’t care less while being admired by the surrounding people.

.....After a moment of self-satisfaction, a shadow appeared outside the window.

But there was nothing there...

No. Was there something in the sky?

The shadow was cast on the ground, moving along with the carriage. Then, the shadow became smaller.

When I put my head out of the window to check, the shadow vanished.

Was it a bird? Or a flying monster?

“Hey, Megumin. Did you discover something fun again? Let me see!”

“I’m not changing. Seating is on a first-come-first-served basis!”

At this time, someone interrupted us as we began arguing again.

“Hey, elder sister, I can change seats with you.”

That was the little girl sitting opposite, who was travelling with the auntie.

Being accommodated by a child, Yunyun lowered her head in embarrassment.

.....I should be a bit more self-dignified too.

PART 2

This trade caravan consisted of 10 carriages. It took on paying passengers while transporting the trade goods from various cities.

Someone said earlier that no monsters would attack such a large

caravan.

It was noon now.

We stopped to let the horses rest.

It was open country from Alcanretia to Axel.

Endless grass plains surrounded us on all sides.

“So peaceful... Looking at this scenery, it seemed as though the rumor that the demon king’s army has attacked the imperial capital is a lie...”

Sitting on the grass plain, Yunyun said as she narrowed her eyes to gaze at the scenery.

The other passengers were also sitting on the grass plain to rest. Some were eating, others were sleeping.

“Albays way suk things...”

“Don’t eat and speak at the same time.”

“Gu... If you keep saying such things, it will raise a flag and attract monsters to attack. Of course, I feel like using magic, so that’s fine by me.”

“.....It looks like we should be more careful. Be more vigilant...”

As Yunyun attempted to lower the flag, the surrounding started to be alert.

“If the remaining journey is without incidents, we will be in Axel by tomorrow afternoon.”

“Shut up! Don’t raise any more flags! We learned this at school! This phrase was recorded in the collection of ‘Unspeakable Phrases!’”

I said to Yunyun who was shaking my shoulders.

“No problem. Our caravan is so large. Based on my calculations, our chance of being attacked by monsters is below 0.1%.”

“Shut up! Do you really want to be attacked by monsters!? Are you

doing this on purpose so you can perform before everyone!?”

Of course, but...

“I say that, but merely saying won’t attract monsters. We have so many people, the monsters are not stupid.”

“That’s true... but you still—“

—shouldn’t say such strange things.

Yunyun never finished her sentence.

“Monsters have appeared!”

The adventurers on guard duty shouted as they patrolled the plains —

“That’s why I said! Don’t say such flag-raising phrases! I warned you about this!”

“Wa-Wait, this is not my fault! It is strange that there is an attack even with this many adventurers as guards!”

I hurriedly found an excuse to manage teary-eyed Yunyun and examined my surroundings.

The adventurers who were on guard duty went back and forth to protect their employer and the customers.

One of them looked towards us.

“Great ones of the Crimson Magic Clan! I know it is rude to ask this of the customers, but there are too many monsters. Can you please help us?”

Then, the adventurer took out the spears stored in the back of the carriage.

“Great ones!? Yunyun, did you hear that? He called us noble ones!”

“I-I heard it. He said that—! Why are you so excited!? What struck a chord in Megumin’s heart!!”

To be so honored and yet Yunyun still couldn’t catch the drift. She

took out her staff from her waist.

“The term ‘great one’ is so cool! Let’s go, Yunyun! Treat this as fighting for the reputation of the Crimson Magic Clan. We will lay waste to those monsters!”

I said and raised my staff.

The staff I received from everyone in Home of the Crimson Magic. The ruby at its end was emitting a glaring light.

The surrounding is a broad open plain.

No matter which direction the monsters came from, I could destroy them with Explosion magic before they came close.

“Hahahahaha! My name is Megumin! The top genius of Crimson Magic Clan who uses Explosion magic! See how I blast this plain into a crater!”

I shouted confidently.

“She’s truly great! So reliable!”

The adventurer who took the spear earlier stabbed at the ground. What was he doing?

My suspicion was cleared in an instance. The ground stabbed by the spear suddenly rose.

“This is a small matter. There are many, but they are not strong! It is easier for us when they all come at once like this. After all...”

At the same time, the thing that came out of the ground was...

“The enemy is the common trash monsters, giant earthworms!”

The carnivorous earthworm had a body about five meters in length and one meter in diameter.

“!?” X2

Dumbstruck, Yunyun and I stared at its spectacular form at this close range.

I felt the cries and roars nearby were fading away.

Ah, I'm about to faint.

"These monsters have soft bodies, so they don't have much attack power! They are big and very durable, but as long as you avoid being swallowed alive..."

The adventurer was saying something, but I wasn't listening.

The giant earthworm had no eyes, yet it was facing this way.

This behavior alone was enough to make me break out in goose bumps.

A mouth opened in its pink head...!

—My endurance was at its limit.

"Megumin, wait! I understand your feelings! I really do! But there are so many people here, so you can't use magic! Otherwise, everyone will get hit too!"

Yunyun grabbed my cloak tightly as I began the incantation to cast Explosion magic.

"Let go of me! I will lay waste to this disgusting thing! It is looking this way! It is looking me ahh!"

"I know! I don't want to get close to it either— Let me handle this!"

Even though she was about to lose her reason before the giant earthworm, Yunyun still raised her staff and walked forward.

Yunyun's hand was full of goose bumps.

This giant earthworm should respond to sounds and movements.

It aimed at Yunyun as she began the incantation.

"It-It-It is coming over! Yunyun! Yunyun!"

"Stop pushing me! I will finish it off now. Stop using me as a shield! Fire Ball!!"

With tears streaking down her face, Yunyun released her magic in annoyance!

The power of the magic used by Crimson Magic Clansmen with large amount of mana was different from those used by ordinary wizards.

Following a loud explosion, Yunyun's fire ball blew up the upper body of the earthworm.

"O-One hit!? Crimson Magic Clan is so powerful...!"

"She destroyed the giant earthworm known for its high endurance so easily...!"

There were sounds of surprise everywhere. Yunyun was probably afraid of the disgusting earthworm, so she must have imbued too much mana into her staff.

It was inefficient and resulted in an overpowered attack, but this attack brought the cheers of the watching adventurers.

An armored adventurer with a sabre came towards us.

"We can win easily like this! Great one, my Detect Enemy skill tells me that there are still many earthworms underground! We'll leave them to you!"

"Eh!?" X2

He said and ran off to protect the merchants.

E-Even if you said there were many earthworms underground...!

At this time, as if to prove the adventurer's words, the ground nearby started to shake.

"I-If it is just these trash, an arch wizard like me won't need to take action! I'm very worried about the safety of that auntie who gave us dessert earlier and that little girl, so I will return to the carriage...!"

"If you are an arch wizard, help me think of something! Oh no, so many! Hey, Megumin, at least look straight at those earthworms when you speak!"

PART 3

—Back inside the carriage.

We and the adventurers successfully drove off the large amount of giant earthworms...

“Wow! So this is the Crimson Magic Clan! It is an eye-opener! It is unbelievable for a single person to kill off so many giant earthworms!”

“That’s right. I heard that Crimson Magic Clansmen are excellent wizards, but I didn’t expect them to be this powerful!”

“Based on what you say, this is still not up to standard for Crimson Magic Clan? Too powerful...!”

Yunyun was forced to sit in the middle of the carriage. The adventurers and passengers were praising her ceaselessly. She lowered her head in embarrassment.

Yunyun had reduced many earthworms to ashes. When she recovered her wits, she discovered more than half of the earthworms were killed by her.

Since the corpses may attract other monsters, we departed without resting.

And now.

Yunyun, who made the most contributions, was being “attacked” by questions like “What is your destination?”.

“It is so lucky to have you onboard. We will thank you properly when we reach Axel. After all, you didn’t take on the job of guarding the caravan. At least, let me pay you for doing so!”

“No... No need... It was nothing...”

She said with a soft voice. After being praised, Yunyun was even more embarrassed.

As for me...

“Elder sister must be more powerful than that sister who wears ribbons, right? We can be at ease next time if more powerful monsters appear!”

“.....Right. When more powerful monsters appear, I will take action. At that time, I will let you witness my sure-kill magic.”

“I’ll look forward to it!”

I sat straight at the window two seats away from Yunyun and listened to the little girl’s praise.

This shouldn’t be like this...

Of course, there was an excuse— If I used Explosion magic in that place, the carriages and passengers would be blown away.

So leaving it to Yunyun was the right choice— Of course, I was somewhat afraid of those earthworms...

“I heard that Crimson Magic Clansmen love attention and fighting, always setting a high profile. But you are like a normal person!”

“That’s right. Humble and serious. I need to change my impression of Crimson Magic Clan!”

“When I heard that there are Crimson Magic Clansmen in the carriage, I was worried there might be trouble. It seemed I was worrying for nothing!”

“It-It isn’t like that... I-I’m always the weird one in the village...”

“You are being modest again! You say you are just a dabbler, but you are probably the most powerful Crimson Magic Clansman!”

“That’s right. I don’t believe a powerful person like you is merely a dabbler. I heard when Crimson Magic Clansmen take the stage, they would declare their strange names. You definitely qualify to use the title of ‘Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One Wizard’, right?”

... ..

“Elder sister, what happened? Are you hurt? Were you injured in the previous battle?”

I grinded my teeth in pain. The little girl opposite was worried.

“—Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One Wizard, huh. I’m a bit embarrassed...”

Yunyun finally left those people behind and came next to me. She mumbled to herself excitedly.

Ahhh...!

“You merely defeated some trash monsters. If there were nobody in the way, I could wipe them all out! So don’t think you have won!”

“I-I didn’t think I have won! It’s just... It’s just that the passengers acknowledged my strength...”

Yunyun explained hurriedly, but the smile persisted on her face.

.....So annoying.

“Let’s have a match! We will see who is stronger during the next rest time!”

“Wh-What! A match! Fine, I accept the challenge! Anyway, we haven’t had a match since we graduated. Since both of us have learned magic, it’s time to decide who is the real ‘Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One Wizard’!”

“Ah, then forget it. I don’t want to gamble ‘Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One’ title in this kind of match.”

“Hey, hey, wait! You are trying to run off after winning!”

I ignored the noisy Yunyun and turned my head towards the window.

“.....?”

“Hey, are you listening!? Since you refuse the challenge, I win by default...! ...Megumin! What is it? Is it competing Lizard Runners again?”

“...No, I was probably seeing things.”

I replied haphazardly to Yunyun, who was asking curiously.

.....I thought I saw a shadow earlier.

Maybe a giant bird was attracted by the dead earthworms and flew overhead.

When I started to argue with Yunyun again, I had forgotten about the shadow—

PART 4

“Come, great one! Please eat. At least recover some energy!”

“Th-Thank you very much.”

“ ”

The rest of the journey was uneventful. The sun had set and the surrounding was in darkness.

The carriages stopped by the lake and we set up camp.

Yunyun was invited to the campfire by the merchant leader.

“It is so rare for a 13-year-old to be so proficient in magic. Is this the norm in the Home of the Crimson Magic?”

“No-Not at all. Some of my fellow classmates can use advanced magic, so my standard is actually below average...”

“Advanced magic! They can use advanced magic at this age! No wonder even the demon king’s army is afraid of Crimson Magic Clan!”

It seemed the merchant leader really liked Yunyun.

He took a tasty-looking piece of meat from the barbeque pit and offered it to Yunyun.

“ ”

“.....Meg-Megumin, do you want some? It’s very tasty.”

I put Chomsuke on my knees and looked at her from a distance. She

noticed it and said, “Gu...” I felt I would have lost if I accepted the meat.

I didn’t perform in the previous fight because there were other people in the area.

If the battle field was wider, this wouldn’t be happening.

I was the top genius of Crimson Magic Clan, so I wouldn’t be discouraged because of one failure!

“Little sister, come and eat as well. You must eat more, so you can be like your elder sister.”

“.....We are fellow classmates.”

“Eh!? M-My apologies. How do I say this... Miss Yunyun looked more matured, so...”

“If you have some comments about my growth, please say it.”

As I was about to argue with the leader, an adventurer returned from patrol.

He was equipped with leather armor and a dagger, so he was probably a thief.

“I completed one patrol. No sign of monsters nearby.”

He seemed to have whistled nearby earlier.

“Assign the minimum number of people for night watch. Everyone else rest early. Many monsters are afraid of fire, but conversely, fire can attract more intelligent monsters. Pass these words along to the other adventurers.”

That person lit a fire and went off to find other adventurers.

“Ah, ah. I better go along and lead them directly.”

The leader added hurriedly and left for elsewhere with that adventurer who made his report.

.....He was probably afraid of being pestered by me and wanted to

escape.

Other passengers were fast asleep in the carriages. The journey seemed to have tired them out.

Yunyun and I remained alone by the fire.

“.....Hey, Megumin. My performance today was great.”

Yunyun said excitedly.

“Heheh. You are praising yourself over some slight activity.”

“No-Not true! I didn’t think like that. Don’t come closer!”

She quickly explained as I approached slowly. Then, she recovered and said shyly.

“...Think about it. When I was in the village, I was just an inconspicuous kid...”

“That’s true. I frequently wondered if you were using Invisibility skill.”

“Hey, wait... Nev-Never mind— Today, I finally showed my mettle and was relied upon by so many people, isn’t it?”

Yunyun lowered her head and said happily.

.....I suddenly noticed Chomsuke on my lap was staring at a fixed direction.

“So, I-I have a bit of confidence now. Actually, I wanted to say this after I learned advanced magic— Megumin, if it is possible, uh... you and I... together...?”

It was staring at a patch of darkness.

What was it?

I thought and stood up...

Something flapped its wings and flew out of the darkness Chomsuke was staring at.

“To-Together form a party... Eh?”

That flying thing seized Chomsuke and vanished into the darkness...

“...Chomsuke was taken so easily. Is this a new method to hit on someone?”

“Hey!!”

The creature that took Chomsuke wasn't alone in emerging from the darkness.

Following the piercing sounds of flapping wings were—

“Kyaaa! Giant bats! It's a colony of giant bats!”

Vulture-sized giant bats attacked in the glow of the campfire!

PART 5

I picked up Chomsuke. Bat corpses were everywhere.

“Phew. That's lucky. You were nearly taken away and eaten by a bat.”

“.....”

I said to Chomsuke, while Yunyun looked over with reprimanding eyes. She was panting heavily.

“Yunyun, you have been troubled. Perform well once more.”

“You should help! In this darkness, the other adventurers' attacks have low accuracy! My ma-ma-mana is about...”

Yunyun staggered and sat down. At this time, the leader and other adventurers came over.

I wanted to help, but if I used Explosion magic in the darkness, who knew how many people I would hurt by accident?

“Miss Yunyun, thank you very much! You saved us again! This journey depended so much on you. I really don't know what to say...!”

“Right, you are so powerful! How do you release intermediate magic of such power?”

“Hey, you are going to Axel to find a party, right? Want to join my party...”

Everyone was busy praising Yunyun.

But Yunyun, who exhausted her mana, seemed to be unconcerned.

“It’s late. Miss Yunyun have used up all her mana. She looked really exhausted. Whatever you have to say, leave it for tomorrow. Miss Yunyun, please have a good rest!”

At the leader’s orders, everyone else dispersed to rest.

At this time, an adventurer, who was next to Yunyun, glanced at me.

.....

“By the way, what did that kid do? She didn’t do much when we were fighting the giant earthworms too...”

“Idiot. She must have been protecting the passengers.”

“Even so, she should have used a bit of magic....”

I listened to such critique as I walked over to Yunyun.

Although she was very tired, she still looked at me with great satisfaction.

“Megumin, how was my performance?”

What performance?

I covered myself with blanket, closed my eyes, and slept at Yunyun’s side. Only the portion of my head from my nose up was exposed.

I wasn’t unhappy or dissatisfied because I didn’t act or perform.

“So intermediate magic is still acceptable? I think it’s quite useful.”

“True~”

“Hey, don’t be quarrelsome just because you didn’t get a chance to use Explosion magic.”

I wasn’t being quarrelsome!

Definitely not!

“...Uh, I say, let’s continue our earlier conversation... If it’s possible, form a party with me...”

I grinded my teeth at my own sense of incompetence. I wasn’t really listening to Yunyun and merely responded perfunctorily.

PART 6

The next day morning.

“You have been troubled last night! Wow, Crimson Magic Clan is really reliable!”

“No-Not at all... I-I have a lot of faults...”

In the shaking carriage, Yunyun continued to be very popular.

She continued to blush and lower her head as if she was not used to being praised. However, her voice was slightly louder as if she was more confident than before.

I clenched my teeth and glared at Yunyun who was being sought after, and turned to look out of the window.

“Last night, elder sister also went to vanquish the monsters, right? I was asleep, so I don’t know what happened.”

The little girl sitting opposite said innocently.

“I’m the trump card for emergencies. I will use my power only when there is a really strong enemy. So last night, I let my minion, that sister over there, to clean up those monsters.”

“Hey! I heard that!”

My minion, who was sitting in the middle of the carriage, protested.

“By the way, that was the second monster attack. There shouldn’t be a third time, so let’s relax until we reach Axel.”

“How many times have I warned you not to raise flags! Isn’t it said that bad things happen in threes!”

I chuckled in disdain at Yunyun’s anxiety.

—After the last goblin had fallen, I sighed.

“Phew... It’s finally over. But with Crimson Magic Clansmen like us here, battle is so easy.”

“What is your basis for speaking like you have accomplished something? The adventurers and I did all the work! Megumin was just relaxing on the sidelines! I told you so many times not to raise flags! It’s all your fault we are being attacked repeatedly!”

I chose to view the surrounding scenery.

The place was filled with dead humanoid corpses about the size of a human child— goblins.

.....What should I say, this...

This was already the third time the caravan was attacked by monsters... But I didn’t think I was responsible for them.

Even so, it was very strange for a large caravan to be attacked repeated in such a short time.

.....Was it really because of my unnecessary words?

Although it was merely low level monsters like goblins, the number was truly staggering. The exhausted adventurers panted heavily and sat down on the ground.

We were attacked just as we nearly arrived at Axel.

.....Annoying. This trip was really uneasy.

Teleport from Home of the Crimson Magic to Alcanretia, then going to Axel by carriage.

A simple trip like this was filled by disasters.

It was a mess in Alcanretia dealing with the weird uncle. The caravan to Axel was attacked by monsters repeatedly.

Thinking back on these encounters—

“Elder sister.”

The little girl emerged from the carriage with the auntie leading her.

And then...

“And elder brothers... Thank you very much.”

She said and smiled sweetly.

Her words brought smiles to the tired adventurers on the ground.

Seeing her smile made me feel that my hard work wasn't wasted.

“No need for thanks. Defeating these trash monsters is nothing worth mentioning.”

“Hey, you didn't do anything, Megumin! Why do you look as if you made the most contributions! You are the only one who didn't contribute!”

Even though she probably exhausted her mana, Yunyun jumped up from her sitting position to protest.

Seeing this scene, the adventurers and passengers laughed.

—At this time.

“Cursed Lightning!”

A sharp female voice said and a beam of light flashed over.

The lightning bolt struck from the sky and pierced the head of a carriage horse.

Seeing the horse died with its head blown off, the adventurers jumped up from the ground.

They hurriedly looked in the direction of the magic—

“Hehe. Look at your exhausted selves. This time, I will surely bring back Lady Wolbach. I have carefully gauged your capabilities. There is nobody to save you all now. Don’t think you will be as lucky as you were in Home of the Crimson Magic and Alcanretia, okay?”

This time, she was no longer in hiding.

She was the greater demon flying in the sky with her wings— Anis.

I sighed deeply.

“You are a real bother. This kid is my Chomsuke. When are you going to give up?”

I said and picked up Chomsuke, who was pestering me at my feet.

I thought Anis would be worried when she saw me using my shameless familiar as a shield, but this wasn’t the case.

She descended upon the ground lightly and said confidently.

“You are the one who should give up... I already paid the money. If you don’t intend to give me Lady Wolbach, pay me back.”

“!?”

Hearing her demand for money, I shivered. But this wasn’t the time to back off!

“I-I-I-I won’t give in to your threats. The Axis Cultists told me that when dealing with demons, the goddess will bless me even if I break a promise or if I simply defeat it!”

“It’s true the Axis Cultists say that, but this is too unreasonable! Hey, Megumin, if you are short on money, I will pay. For now, listen to her...”

Yunyun came over to suggest, but Anis scolded us angrily.

“That’s why humans cannot be trusted! We demons ceased granting wishes in exchange for souls because you humans always find excuses to avoid payment after having your wishes granted! And the

wishes were so unreasonable! You humans should live more honestly!”

I didn’t expect we would receive a lecture on honesty by a demon.

This demon must have a lot of bad experiences.

“In any case, even if you return the money, I will take Lady Wolbach with me! That little girl from Crimson Magic Clan, you are the most powerful among this lot! I also know you have just exhausted your mana! In other words, you are helpless to resist me! The other adventurers shouldn’t move recklessly! I can kill everyone easily! Stop stalling for time and hand Lady Wolbach over!”

.....Hm?

Since she knew Yunyun’s mana was exhausted, she must have been observing our fights. She chose the best time to appear.

And why did she say Yunyun was the most powerful among us?

I, the top genius of Crimson Magic Clan, was still here, yet she said nobody could resist her. It made me fume.

“Uh, I have not exhausted my mana. Or rather, I’m the trump card of this caravan. You should be more cautious...”

“Get lost, useless Crimson Magic Clansman.”

... ..

“Hey, who is ‘useless Crimson Magic Clansman’ referring to? Who do you think I am? I’m...”

“An arch wizard who couldn’t use magic? I didn’t lose so many times for nothing. I have been carefully observing you since Alcanretia.”

She was observing me...

I finally understood.

Normally, a large caravan like this would not be repeatedly attacked by monsters.

“...Those giant earthworms and giant bats, plus the goblins this time — They were all arranged by you?”

Hearing my question, Anis smiled maliciously.

“You noticed? That’s right. Consider it as a bit of revenge for causing me so much woe. A bit of killing intent from a greater demon like me would be enough to force these weak monsters out... That’s right. I wanted to see this expression! This helpless and dissatisfied expression!”

Dam-Damn it...!

“This journey should have been very fun, but because of you, I have become an unpopular kid! This price...”

Would be very high!

As I was about to say it, that thief adventurer directed a sneak attack at Anis!

I only noticed his presence now.

He must have used Lurk skill to get close to Anis.

That adventurer pounced on Anis...

“You are in the way!”

Anis casually swung her fist and sent him flying.

The others were watching for an opening. Seeing this scene, they backed off.

The adventurer who was attacked lay motionlessly on the ground.

“Damn it...! Everyone! Surround her!”

A person in knight armor ordered the other adventurers, and everyone rushed at Anis!

This person must be the leading adventurer.

PART 7

“—Th-This fellow is ridiculously strong! ... Why is such a powerful demon near the City of Rookies?”

An adventurer, whose shield was shattered, cried out as he threw his ruined shield on the floor.

—This was a disaster.

All the adventurers guarding the caravan were defeated. Some were so heavily injured that if they did not receive healing soon, they would die.

Besides Yunyun and I who stood in our original spot, only two persons were left out of the 20 or more adventurers.

The watching passengers were seized by fear, too scared to drive the carriages away.

Yunyun and I were passengers, but since we could fight, we couldn't shamelessly hide inside the carriage.

Even though Yunyun exhausted her mana, she drew her silver dagger, searching for an opening by Anis.

And I—

“Anis, have a duel with me! I am the top genius of Crimson Magic Clan! Your goal is Chomsuke, right? This furball is yours if you defeat me... Hey, listen to me!”

Even using Chomsuke as bait, Anis continued to ignore me. It seemed like I was performing a soliloquy.

It was good that the adventurers were willing to fight, but once they engaged her, I couldn't use Explosion magic anymore.

I wanted to change a location to fight her alone...!

“.....I will finish you off last! I will defeat these people who are still putting up a fight. I won't be deceived by you anymore. I already know you cannot use magic! Think about it, even when we first met,

that girl was the one who used magic. You didn't use magic at all. It was the same in Alcanretia. If you could use magic, I would have at least heard your incantation."

Anis didn't even look at me.

I couldn't use magic?

Oh, someone was saying the same thing earlier.

Of course I couldn't use Explosion magic in Home of the Crimson Magic. Using it in the streets of Alcanretia was also impossible...

"I got suspicious since that time. I suspected that you couldn't use magic for some reasons. To be cautious, I even summoned those monsters— The result was what I expected! You never used magic during all three monster attacks!"

Anis shouted in joy as she pounced on one of the two remaining adventurers.

The adventurer counter-attacked with a sword, but Anis easily grabbed the sword and kicked the adventurer's legs.

The heavily armored adventurer fell after being kicked.

In the end, he collapsed while foaming at the mouth.

".....It seems you have a grave misunderstanding. I didn't use magic because if I do so, the nearby people would be affected. This was a choice I made out of concern for other people... Now, it is time to finish this...!"

"Shut up, you Crimson Magic Clansman who is merely all-talk! Using Lady Wolbach as a shield, running from a fight everywhere... You still dare to say such things? You must have some tricks! I won't be tricked this time!"

Anis raised her hand towards the last adventurer.

"Lightning!"

"Ughh!?"

Anis had been fighting bare-handedly so far. When she suddenly used lightning magic, the remaining adventurer couldn't react in time and collapsed after being hit.

At this time, Yunyun came to my side and whispered into my ear.

"Megumin. We are close to the city. If we run with all our might, we may reach it in time."

Escape.

Truly, given the current situation, escaping was the best option.

I glanced at the caravan carriage and my eyes met those of the little girl.

.....What should I do?

If I ran away with Chomsuke, Anis would probably come after us.

And she wouldn't use overly powerful magic since she would be worried about hurting Chomsuke.

It would probably be like this...

"Let me guess what you are thinking right now. You must be thinking of escaping to the city with Lady Wolbach, right? I won't let you succeed. If you run, I will kill everyone here, both the adventurers and the passengers in the carriage. Why do you think I intentionally left these adventurers alive?"

She smiled slyly. Her amber eyes shone with a cruel light.

It seemed my intention to use Chomsuke as hostage was exposed.

...This was bad. What should I do?

"Come, hand Lady Wolbach over to me. If you do so, I will forget our grudges and let all of you go."

Anis smiled— This was a deal with a demon.

...I heard this before, demons honored contracts and promises.

Should I sacrifice Chomsuke and accept her request?

Or...

“No way! I won’t let you have Chomsuke! This kid is not called Wolbach!”

...It looked like there was no need to be troubled over this.

Even this shy, cautious, and conservative kid said so.

“I refused. If you want this furball, take it by force. Yunyun, lend me your dagger! I will use Chomsuke as hostage and run to the city! Hey, Anis! You said earlier that if I run away with this furball, you will kill everyone, right? If you dare to kill them, I will give your beloved master a Mohawk hairstyle!”

“!?” X2

I carried Chomsuke with one hand and reached out my other hand to get the dagger of Yunyun, who was still stunned by what I said.

Anis walked towards us.

She smiled faintly and walked over casually.

“...? You are so bold. Don’t forget I have this furball. If you leave now, I promise I will take care of this kid. If you are worried about its safety—“

“I know very well that you won’t kill Lady Wolbach. Hahaha, your threat won’t work on me.”

Anis said and smiled flirtatiously.

No-Not good. I didn’t think she would see through this. I thought she would avoid any situation that might endanger Chomsuke’s life!

What should I do? What should I do...!

Even so, I cannot hand over Chomsuke...!

“Megumin, retreat. Leave this to me...!”

Yunyun came in front of me with her dagger in hand. Her weak shoulders were trembling slightly.

It seemed I was being protected by Yunyun all the time.

“What can you do with a dagger? There is nobody more useless than a Crimson Magic Clansman who cannot use magic... Of course, I’m speaking of that one who is all talk and no action.”

.....

“Megumin is not useless! Megumin is... much more powerful as a wizard than me!”

Yunyun shouted even though she was trembling.

“Then why is she not using magic? ...It’s not that she doesn’t use, but that she can’t use, right? I heard in Crimson Magic Clan, only those who can use advanced magic can graduate. Yet you use only intermediate magic. And that Megumin over there? Are you currently accumulating skill points to learn advanced magic? I must be right! Prententious Crimson Magic Clan!”

.....

“.....You didn’t say anything for some time. Not going to retort?”

“Enough.”

I shifted Chomsuke from my left hand to right hand, and picked up the staff at my feet with my left hand.

I interrupted Anis who was trying to provoke me.

“No need to say more. Picking a fight should be the standard for Crimson Magic Clan.”

“...? What ‘enough’? I’m not afraid at all...”

“I don’t want to waste my breath with you. See for yourself if I’m really all talk and no action.”

As if she was subdued by my mood, Anis took a step back.

Then, she carefully examined me.

“You mean you can really use magic? Don’t think you can bluff your

way through this.”

Anis said that, but she became more vigilant.

“Meg-Megumin. What are you planning to do...?”

Yunyun asked in fear as she was affected subdued by my mood.

“...You really want Chomsuke, right?”

“Eh?” X2

Hearing my sudden statement, Anis, and even Yunyun, made a sound of surprise.

It seemed not only Yunyun and Anis sensed something bad was going to happen.

Chomsuke, who was obediently in arms so far, suddenly started to struggle.

I lowered my right hand, which was holding on to Chomsuke, to my waist level...

“If-If you hand it over, I can let you go...”

“Then you can have it. You must catch it properly though.”

Anis was about to say something. I threw Chomsuke high—
Into the sky behind her.

“Hey, Megumin, what are you doing—!”

“Nooo! Lady Wolbach!!”

Anis cried out and flew desperately into the sky, finally managing to catch Chomsuke in mid-air.

I held the staff tightly with both hands, and aimed at Anis who flew high into the sky to catch Chomsuke...!

“Stop! Wait, Megumin! What are you doing! Stop casting! Stop it now!”

My incantation was interrupted by Yunyun, who was grabbing my hands.

“What are you doing? This is a good chance! The enemy is in the air, if I use Explosion magic now, other people won’t get hurt!”

“No! Chomsuke will be hurt! Can’t you see Chomsuke is with her!”

As if sensing my seriousness, Yunyun held on to my hands tightly, refusing to let go.

“That is my familiar! It can’t be helped if a familiar dies to protect its master! I will make a grave for it... Ah, let go of me, let go of my staff! I’m being called a Crimson Magic Clan who is all talk and no action! I cannot back off now!”

“I won’t let go! How can I let go! If you are of Crimson Magic Clan, calmly deal with the enemy’s provocations!”

As Yunyun and I were arguing, there was a pressure from the sky above.

I lifted my head to look. With blood-shot eyes, Anis held Chomsuke in one hand and lifted the other hand to the sky.

Anis flapped her large wings to hover in mid-air, while chanting her incantation.

“Yunyun! Anis’ magic will be completed soon! We will be killed. The passengers and adventurers will all be killed! Let go of my staff now!”

“But! But! I understand. I really understand our situation— But! Megumin, you are heartless! Ba-Based on Crimson Magic Clan’s practice plot, at this critical moment, someone will come to the rescue...! Ah! I’m a fool. Why would anyone come to the rescue! Help us, Lady Eris, goddess of luck!”

“What’s the use of praying at this time! If you really belong to Crimson Magic Clan, then pray to the god of destruction! I’m going...!!”

Yunyun continued to interfere, but I held the staff tightly and

forcefully continue my incantation.

Anis was twirling a huge ball of fire before us.

If we were hit, we would definitely be reduced to ashes.

The fire ball was already larger than Anis' body...!

"Oh, nameless god of destruction who was sealed in Home of the Crimson Magic... Goddess Lady Eris! ...And incidentally, also Goddess of Water Lady Aqua...! If we survive this, I will surely urge Megumin to be a good person! Please, save Chomsuke as well!!"

"Wh-What are you saying about me...! Give it up now. This world is so cruel, not everything will go your way...!"

—At the moment when I said this.

I felt a flow of mana that caused me, who could use Explosion magic, to shiver.

My overwhelming mana could be used to reshape the terrain, but even I couldn't help but stop my incantation to look in that direction.

I wasn't the only one who sensed this mana.

Yunyun was trembling and staring in the same direction.

And also—

".....!? Wh-What is this mana...! No, divine aura...!?"

Anis' expression was even more frightened than when she was nearly destroyed in Alcanretia. Her magic was halted mid-way as well.

It was as if she met a natural enemy.

The person Anis feared was of course in the direction we were staring at.

At the same time, that was our destination, Axel.

Anis was so frightened that she didn't realize she released her grip on Chomsuke. Chomsuke fell from her hands.

“.....Ah!!”

Hovering in mid-air, Anis finally noticed her mistake.

She wanted to catch Chomsuke immediately, but stopped when she saw Yunyun charging over.

Yunyun caught Chomsuke as she was about to hit the ground.

Anis saw this and breathed a sigh of relief.

“.....Wh-What are you doing...!?”

She looked at me as I finished my incantation and pointed my staff at her.

The tip of the staff held a huge amount of compressed mana, glowing with a white light.

The watching passengers in the carriage noticed this light and swallowed their saliva.

They have no mana, yet their instincts must have told them this light is very unnatural.

Anis' face paled.

“.....What is this magic?”

“Explosion magic.”

She shivered as I replied casually.

Yunyun was running towards me with Chomsuke in her arms. Anis couldn't be bothered with her anymore. She fixed her stare on me.

“.....I understand. I will retreat this time, Crimson Magic Clan. I apologize for saying you are merely all-talk.”

“Don't apologize. Crimson Magic Clansmen are merciless once they are in battle. I won't let you escape.”

Hearing this, Anis was stunned while still hovering in the air.

Then, with a twitching smile, she quickly raised her hand towards

me...!

“Cursed Lightning!”

“Explosion—!!”

My magic was marginally faster than Anis’.

On this day, my sure-kill skill exploded in the sky of Axel City for the first time.

PART 8

“Oh wow. This truly changed my impression— No, I don’t mean I was suspicious of you before! From the start, I believed you must be a very powerful arch wizard!”

After exhausting my mana, I rested at my window seat, which became a special seat of honor. The caravan leader was praising me non-stop.

After vanquishing Anis with Explosion magic, the wounded were taken onboard the carriage, which then departed for Axel once more...

“By the way, it is really scary when Crimson Magic Clansman get serious. At that time, I thought the mountains were falling apart!”

“The magic was striking at mid-air, yet there was still a small crater in the ground below! Isn’t this overpowered? What is that magic? I heard that wizards who can use advanced magic are very rare— could it be that was advanced magic?”

I answered their endless stream of questions.

Actually, I wanted to rest properly, but this feeling of being exalted wasn’t bad.

Yunyun, who also exhausted her mana, sat next to me and looked at me in dissatisfaction. That was the kind of expression I wanted.

“And that demon was so powerful. Yet it still couldn’t survive that

huge explosion.”

The adventurer pressed on his wounded hand and said painfully.

—Demons are denizens of hell.

Even if their physical bodies were destroyed in this world, they were not completely defeated.

I heard some super powerful demons could use ‘residues’ to prepare a substitute soul and revive instantly. This was so powerful it verged on cheating.

Even so, it was unlikely to meet Anis again in this world.

“That demon sister is not merely strong. She is powerful in other aspects too...”

.....

An adventurer started saying, leading the topic towards Anis’ appearance.

.....When I looked for companions in Axel, I must find an honest man who wouldn’t sexually harass me.

I thought as I let my body drooped.

“Hey, Megumin. You are really powerful. You even defeated that kind of demon...”

Yunyun said next to me in a voice so soft that only I could hear.

“Of course I’m powerful. After all, I’m Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One wizard.”

Yunyun looked somewhat dissatisfied, yet at the same time, was smiling happily.

“.....I say, about what I said last night... I think, forget it.”

She said and smiled bitterly.

Now that she mentioned it, she was inviting me to do something last night. I couldn’t remember clearly.

I was feeling sleepy then, so I casually brushed her off...

I silently tried hard to recall yesterday's events. Yunyun panicked as if she misunderstood something.

"I-I don't mean that! It's not because I dislike being with Megumin! Not at all... I just feel that if we form a party, I will be your stumbling block, so..."

Yunyun looked over. Her eyes were filled with determination.

"I will train hard. Wait for me to learn advanced magic, then we will have a match... And..."

She said something more, but her voice was too soft, so I didn't hear anything.

Compared to advanced magic, what she really needed was social skills.

But...

"No problem. We'll have a match then. Besides, no matter how hard you train, you will be left crying in defeat."

"Say that while you can! When I become stronger, I will surely let Megumin ask for a match on her own initiative!"

We argued as we leaned against our seats. A happy laughter was heard from the opposite seats.

It was the auntie who gave us desserts and her daughter.

I finally got a chance to perform, yet now I was being so pathetic before her.

Yunyun and I looked at her in shame.

"Hey, powerful wizard sister."

The little girl smiled and said.

"Thank you for saving Mommy and everyone!"

.....Yunyun and I looked at each other.

Was an adventurer that kind of job that could frequently received the thanks and adoration of the common people?

If so, I had the motivation to work hard in this city.

“By the way, Megumin...”

Yunyun said meaningfully.

“At that time, did you sense an enormous mana from Axel? It was like... That’s right. Like a god using miracle-level magic.”

.....I was very concerned too.

“What was that? After that, the sensation was gone. Or rather, wasn’t the timing too perfect? Yunyun, weren’t you praying earlier? Maybe a god decided to help us on a whim.”

“Eh!? But... What should I do? At that time, I prayed to every god... Including the evil god and the god of destruction... I called upon every single god I could think of...”

.....

“We-Well, forget it. We are saved in the end.”

“Th-That’s true, but I’m very concerned about what was happening in the city...”

I glanced at Yunyun, who was deep in thought, and slowly brought myself up to look out of the window.

Our carriage just entered the city and was moving slowly for traffic safety.

On the stone-paved streets, the carriage moved forward with the sound of rocking.

At this time.

I saw a youth with gleaming eyes as if everything was new to him. There was also a blue-haired beautiful girl, whose mouth was gaping in shock.

These two people should be slightly older than me.

“...This is a parallel world... Hey, this is really a parallel world! Eh? It's real, really real? I'm really going to use magic or start adventuring in this world?”

The youth's voice was heard through the open window.

These two people also just arrived in Axel.

“Ah...Ah Ah... Ah Ah Ah.....”



The girl trembled and cried out softly in despair.

.....What's wrong with these two people?

Was it annoying or disconcerting?

“Animal ears! There are animal ears! And elf ears! Is that an elf!? So petite, it should be! Goodbye, shut-in life! Hello, parallel world! Since this is the world, I have confidence to work outside!”

“Ahahahah..... Ahahahahah..... Ahahahahahah!”

The youth shouted something I couldn’t understand... Or rather, I didn’t dare to understand.

The girl’s trembling got more severe.

“Hey, you are noisy! People will think I’m friends with a crazy woman! By the way, shouldn’t you give me something at this time? Look at my appearance. I’m wearing a tracksuit! I’m wearing a tracksuit in a fantasy parallel world! You should follow gaming convention and give me some starter equipment...”

“AHHHAHAHAHAHH!!”

The girl started choking the youth.

“Ugh! Wh-What are you doing? Stop! I understand. I’ll think of something for the starter equipment. I’m sorry. If you are so unwilling, then go back. I’ll think of something on my own.”

The youth waved his hand in annoyance.

“What are you saying!? I’m in trouble because I can’t go back!! What should I do!? Hey, what should I do! What should I do from now on!?”

.....I didn’t know the details, but I better not get involved with these two people.

I listened to their cries, turning my gaze back into the carriage.

What should I do from now on?

I looked at Yunyun, who drifted to sleep next to me.

Surrounded by the noise from outside, I decided to sleep too...

INTERLUDE: FINAL SCENE

Lady Aqua, I Thank You!

A few days after Miss Megumin left for Axel City.

Life had returned to the days before the cute Lolita came, but...

“My Tokoroten Slime...”

.....That’s right.

That female demon probably used my Tokoroten Slime to commit crimes.

After sending Miss Megumin off, I wanted to get some Tokoroten Slime from the kitchen...

But the hidden sack of Tokoroten Slime had vanished.

That female demon was bold enough to infiltrate the base of Axis Cult.

Absolutely unforgivable!

It was hurtful enough to part with my dream Lolita. This was like adding salt to my wound.

If I knew it would be like this, I should have acted upon my desire and go to Axel City with Miss Megumin.

—As I was full of the negative energy from rage and regret.

“I received an oracle!”

Lord Zesta suddenly shouted.

What? Was he getting senile?

His conduct had always been weird, but declaring such things like an “oracle”...

Lord Zesta excitedly raised both hands in his bath before the sympathetic gazes of the other cultists and me.

“I received a sacred telepathic message from Lady Aqua! Everyone, listen! Lady Aqua! She sent a telepathic message that she was in trouble in a faraway place!”

This could not be simply dismissed.

“Lady Aqua!?”

“Lord Zesta. We can ignore all the stupid things you normally say, but using Lady Aqua as a joke is too much, right?”

Under the suspicious gazes of the cultists, Lord Zesta blushed and said.

“‘I’m Aqua. That’s right. I’m the object of worship for the Axis Cult, the goddess Aqua! If thou art my worshipper...! ...It would be a big help if you can lend me some money.’This is the direction towards Axel City!? The sacred telepathic message came from there!”

Lord Zesta’s eyes said as his eyes glowed with determination.

Although Lord Zesta was a hopeless person, he was still a devout Axis Cultist.

His devotion earned him the recognition of all the other cultists in this city.

Other things aside, he wouldn’t lie to belittle Lady Aqua.

Axel City was Miss Megumin’s destination.

.....This was a revelation.

“We don’t know the details, but Lady Aqua needing money is needlessly suspicious. I don’t know what is happening in Axel City. There should be some disaster happening there...”

This was a revelation from Lady Aqua to me.

That’s right. Lady Aqua’s teachings included such a line.

“When thou art troubled, remember to enjoy the present and live in a carefree manner.”

“Therefore, now we should prepare to send some people to Axel City for investigation.”

“Remember not to suppress your desires, but act upon your instincts ...”

Lord Zesta looked at the Axis Cultists around him.

“Is there anyone willing to go to Axel City—”

At the same time, I raised my hand.

—Lady Aqua, I Thank You!

Epilogue



A certain hotel in Axel City.

The caravan leader prepared a room for me as a thank-you gift for defeating the demon.

I dragged my exhausted body and staggered into the room prepared for me, then simply collapsed on the bed.

.....So sleepy.

After exhausting my mana, my body felt very tired and I suddenly felt very sleepy.

This tiredness wasn't merely caused by mana exhaustion.

Thinking back, a lot of things happened after leaving Home of the Crimson Magic.

Where were all the years I spent living in the village?

In the outside world, there were too many "abnormal" events.

In this short time, I experienced a lot of difficulties.

.....Even so, they were some pretty good memories. Or should I say, I encountered some strange people—

As I lay on the bed, I felt something stepped onto my back.

It must be my shameless familiar taking advantage of her tired master.

I got up quickly, grabbed Chomsuke from my back, and tugged it under the blanket.

At this time, due to my movements, something fell out of the luggage I dumped on the bed.

It was a familiar picture book. As I lay down, I picked the book up.

—This was a famous legend from a long time ago.

In a certain place, there was once a genius youth.

That youth had an unimaginable talent. He could become stronger

with just a little bit of combat.

Adventurers admired and feared that youth.

That youth was always alone.

At that time.

There was a fearless adventuring party which invited him to join.

But that youth said.

“If there is a cheat, there is no need for companions. I can be a solo player and get all the loot. Solo play hurray!” That youth was strong to that extent.

The youth was very strong, defeating the demon king’s army by himself repeatedly.

In desperation, the demon king realized that he was no match for the youth in a direct confrontation. How could he defeat the youth then?

At this time, the demon king noticed that the youth never joined a party.

The leader of the demon king’s army told the youth, “A lonely, loveless hero is a joke! Heroes usually have companions to work hard together and defeat the demon king! You don’t even have companions. For what and for whom are you fighting? Why not join the demon king’s army? We have a lot of benefits.”

The leader of the demon king’s army asked him to return when he had an answer. The youth went back obediently.

In the end, the youth attacked the demon king’s castle again and confronted the leader of the demon king’s army.

“I’m not lonely, but a high and mighty solo player. It isn’t that I can’t make friends, but rather I don’t need them. Because I know companions can become a liability... And what was that about benefits! You think I will be tricked! It never ends well when one makes a deal with the demon king! I fight for humanity and peace!! I won’t talk to you any further. My goal is the demon king’s head! I can

let you go, get lost!”

The youth said and pointed at the leader of the demon king’s army.

The leader of the demon king’s army replied, “This would sound so cool if you said it back then.”

—In the end, the leader of the demon king’s army was vanquished as well.

The brave youth charged into the deepest region of the demon king’s castle.

Nothing could stop him. In the end, he came before the demon king —

Since a long time ago, the confrontation between the hero and the demon king was always one-on-one.

But over there...

As if violating the rules, there was a huge group of minions who refused to retreat even when faced with the greatest hero, wishing only to protect the demon king.

—I closed the picture book and put it carefully into the bag.

Did the genius youth, who always fought alone, forcefully cleared all obstacles like I did?

Did he not have a family member like an arrogant but very cute sister as I did?

—That was a story that everyone knew, a story where the youth became the demon king in the end.

I couldn’t resist the desire to sleep anymore and closed my eyes.

Could I find my excellent companions in this city?

If I did, what were they like?

If it was possible...

I wanted to meet people like the fearless party who talked to the

youth—

Credits

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アクア 佐藤和真

🔥 SPECIAL
THANKS 🔥

御剣響夜

紅魔の里の皆さん

アルカンレティアの
街の皆さん

アクシズ教徒の皆さん

エリス教徒の皆さん

馬車の乗客の皆さん

馬車の護衛の
冒険者の皆さん

『この素晴らしい世界に爆焰を! 2
ゆんゆんのターン』

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— 完 —

髪下ろしたゆんゆん。



